

**University of Liège**

**Faculty of Philosophy and Letters**

**Media, Culture and Communication Department**

**MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS**

**FROM 2011 TO 2013:**

**COMPARISON BETWEEN AL-JAZEERA AND AL-MANAR CHANNELS**



Thesis presented by Madeleine KASSAB with a view to obtaining the title of Doctor of Information and Communication under the supervision of Geoffrey GEUENS and Dalia ABDELHADY.

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**Media Coverage of The Syrian Crisis From 2011 to 2013:  
Comparison Between Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar Channels**

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# **Media Coverage of The Syrian Crisis From 2011 to 2013: Comparison Between Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar Channels**

## **Abstract**

The Syrian crisis is characterized by the intertwining of variables at the local, regional and global levels. The geopolitical importance of Syria and the positions of the Syrian government on many issues, most notably the Arab-Israeli conflict and the support of the “Resistance” in Palestine and Lebanon, radically divided the Syrian society and the Arab media into supporters and opponents of the Syrian government and created contrasting mental images of the Syrian crisis. Media not only transmit events but contribute to their creation as well. Media contents are formulated according to the desires and tendencies of the sender so that the recipients get mental images of the facts that make them adopt ideas and behaviors consistent with the propagandists’ objectives. For many, the media are the basic source of information and consequently they are the creator of thoughts and attitudes.

This study tackles the coverage of the internal pivot of the Syrian crisis by Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar channels from 2011 to 2013; that is before the expansion of the crisis on the Arab and international levels and before the role of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) got larger. In addition to its relation to the geopolitical importance of Syria, the importance of this research is related to the influential role of Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar channels on the public opinion of the Arab peoples. Moreover, the engagement of Qatar and Hezbollah in events in Syria increases the importance of the two channels which hold the agendas of their financiers and convey the propagandas of the conflicting parties on the Syrian ground. This study aims at knowing the characteristics of the news discourse that is influenced by many political, economic, religious and military variables and at detecting the tools of propaganda. The quantitative analysis in this research shows the general features of the two channels’ coverage mechanism of the Syrian crisis. The semiotic analysis studies the denotative and connotative levels of the verbal and non-verbal signifiers. This eventually helps to know the mental images which the two channels desire to insert into the recipient’s mind.

This research is based mainly on Agenda-setting Theory, News Framing Theory and Gatekeeping Theory, and based on a multidisciplinary approach. The evoked disciplines are: information and communication sciences, media sociology, politics, linguistics, history, propaganda and misleading, military sciences, sociology, and religion.

The results proved that the tendency of Al-Jazeera is anti- Assad and pro-opposition by a rate of 100%, whereas Al-Manar’s is contrary by 100%. Each signifier mentioned in the research samples contributes to propaganda promotion and psychological war. The two channels adopted several techniques which are known in the field of propaganda some of which are: Assertion, Repetition, Exaggeration, Name-calling, Glittering generalities, Reincarnation and plain folk, Recipient-credible testimonials, Bandwagon, Simplification, Emotional enticement, Euphemism, Diverting attention, Lesser than two evils, Pinpointing the enemy, Inflicting terror and chaos, Lying and misleading.

The study detected other means that were employed in the context of propaganda war on the screens of the two channels: denying and trivializing the existence of the other, the people say the truth, more concentration on the actions of the enemy, simultaneous absence and presence, hinting, linking the destiny

of the State to that of the people, alleviation of events' severity through employing non-verbal signifiers, one signifier is stronger than many combined signifiers, direct and indirect adoption, direct and indirect bias, repeating the opponent's propaganda, exploiting the characteristics of Arabic language, Islamizing events and accusing the enemy of sectarianism, animalizing the opponent and undermining them through exploiting the socially prevailing meanings of words, exploiting the indications of the mentioned numbers, mentioning the names and types of weapons, giving free rein to the recipient's imagination through verbal and non-verbal signifiers, linking the feelings of hope or victory to religious phrases, showing the attitudes of children, disproving the other's propaganda, the channel gives the interviewed people political trends, balancing between the discourses of strength and weakness, images free from a clear meaning and leading the recipient's perception to the images content through the news story, exploiting the position of another enemy in the region, exploiting the interference of allies, stressing that the enemy is not strong and that it is rather brutal, indirect mentioning of the weakness of the opponent in order to justify the military actions, affirming the maintaining attitudes and continuation, the significances of the camera's angles and movement, exploiting non-traditional spoils, metaphors, linking all the catastrophic results to the opponent, a signifier on behalf of another, exploiting the characteristics of the female, integrating the statistical presentation with the emotional enticement, addressing the topic of ethnicities and sects indirectly, the journalists' involvement in the events, human icons, and the propagandists spread their propaganda through mentioning or adopting that of another party.

**Keywords:** Syrian Crisis, Media Content Analysis, Propaganda and Misleading, Verbal and non-Verbal Signs, Al-Jazeera, Al-Manar.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The Arab world is not countries that form a homogeneous block; the administration, economy, political stances, social structures, as well as other factors that determine the identity of countries differ from one country to another in such world. This geographical region witnesses a tremendous spread of modern communication means in a way that cancelled almost completely the role of the traditional cultural means, such as the book. The modern media became the most important source for information and knowledge. This media is subject to the wishes and goals of its owners, which leads to shaping the public awareness in a way that suits such goals (Greg, 2016; Salahuddeen, 2015)

In this context, public movements broke out and shook a group of countries in the Arab world. First in Tunisia; December 2010, then in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain. Toppling down the ruling regimes was the most prominent goal for these movements. For protesters, toppling down presidents meant eradicating corruption and dictatorship (Al-Baiyoomi, 2017; Janabi, 2016; Mokannawi, 2015).

The opposition movements are characterized by dichotomies in many ways the most outstanding of which are: public vs. dictator, religious vs. secular, old vs. young, man vs. woman, national vs. international, poor vs. rich and online vs. offline (Straaten, 2013).

The discrepancy of the political visions created huge difference in the ways these events were covered. In order to describe the anti-regimes' movements, the media set different names: the Arab spring, the Arab awakening, the Islamic awakening, the revolution for liberating from dictatorship, the conspiracy against the unity of the Arab world etc.

The different sources, the different news frames and the selectivity of vocabulary and pictures gave different images of the same event. The media transfer but also create the events (Mahmood et al, 2014; Harahsha, 2013; Shalash, 2013; Leila Vignal, 2012).

The media stances towards the Arab peoples' movements were evidently subject to the stances of the owners and managers of such media. For example, Al-Jazeera Channel considered demonstrations in Tunis, Egypt, Libya, and Syria as legitimate public right, while it didn't care similarly about the public movement in Bahrain. These demonstrations were seen as movements run by Shiite parties aiming at toppling down the ruling regime and at realizing the Shiite extension in the region. Al-Manar, the pro-Hezbollah Channel, saw that peoples' revolutions against regimes in Tunis, Egypt, Libya and Yemen represent "Islamic awakening", while its vision was completely different regarding what's going on in Syria (Janabi, 2016; Mokannawi, 2015; Harahsha, 2013; Abdullah M, 2012).

The sensitivity of the Syrian event is fundamentally related to the stances of the Syrian government towards many Arab, regional, and international issues. For example, the stance against Israel; the viewpoints are different regarding the credibility of challenging and confronting the “Israeli occupier” by the Syrian government. The same applies to the question of Syria not yielding to the Western dictations; the Euro-American ones.

Some see the Syrian government as a defender, resistant and preserving the Arab nation dignity, and defending its unity. On the other hand, some see that this government is secretly an ally to Israel, and works on protecting the Israeli interests in the region, but dressing the cloak of resistance to hide its real inclinations, so that it’s not confronted by the people who want to liberate “the holy land”, Jerusalem, and also the Golan Height, from Israel. The supporters of the Syrian government see that the goal of the opposition movements is disturbing security and stability; asking for reforms is a facade to cover the real intentions sought to be achieved by many anti-Syria countries. While the anti-government opponents see that its downfall will lead to liberating all Arab occupied lands (Deeb, 2015; Mokannawi, 2015; duMont, 2012; Vignal, 2012).

Critics of the Syrian government believe that the dictatorship of the Syrian regime depended on cultural control and imposed the ideas which glorify the personality of the leading president making his rank reach sacredness. The propaganda of this dictator regime nurtured sectarianism, divided Syrians, depoliticized and neutralized them against participating in any activity or expressing their views or feelings towards the situation in Syria (Magout, 2012). Some people see that the most significant reasons of the Syrian crisis are: the desire of the opposition to change the ruling regime and to demolish corruption, unjust distribution of natural resources and wealth, geopolitical and economic variables that dominate the relations between Syria and the Arab and non-Arab countries, oil and gas, cultural violence, inequality, poverty, the hegemony of religion that controls the people’s behaviors, sectarianism which decides the relation of the people’s groups, and the armed retort of the security forces against the demonstrators. They also think that the opposing movement is a result of the people’s desire rather than foreign orders (Musarurwa & Kaye, 2016; Heydemann, 2018).

However, the different opinion considers that western countries are the actual cause and conductor of these opposing movements. In the viewpoint of this opinion, the Arab people seem unable to take this step on their own (Shihade et al, 2012; Eskjær, 2012). The American media spotlighted the views of some thinkers and researchers of the Issues of the Arab homeland who believe that the culture of the Arab nation and the control of the Islamic bases on thought and conduct disable the Arab peoples to achieve democracy (Salaita, 2012).

Sectarianism seems to be one of the most important factors of the war in Syria. The Sunni sect constitutes the majority of the Syrian opposition whereas the attitude of minorities ranges between supporters of the government and moderate opposers (Balanche, 2018; Badran1& Smets, 2018). Balanche (2018) believes that Assad cannot realize stabilization and security unless he redistributes the Syrian lands and rebalances the population’s size in the favor of the minorities,

especially the Alawite sect. This demographic change means expelling millions of the Arab Sunnis and preventing them from coming back when security is back in Syria. Therefore, millions of Syrians were obliged to migrate and the regime controlled important areas which are considered gathering centers of the Sunni sect such as Idlib and Daraa. If some Sunni refugees thought of coming back to Syria, they would be under the regime's mercy, which means that they would be humiliated. Balanche also sees that minorities like Christians, Alawites, Druze and Ismailis do not trust the promises of the opposition concerning protecting them in case it won and their vows of building a democratic Syria. Moreover, these minorities do not believe in the western promises concerning the international protection of them.

On the international level, as from its beginning, the Syrian crisis created a division in the attitudes of the countries. While the European countries were calling for overthrowing Assad and his government and for an international military intervention, China and Russia stood against these decisions and used the veto to prevent any military intervention in Syria. China justified its attitude saying that the duty of countries is respecting the national sovereignty and not using force in solving the international conflicts (Swaine, 2012).

Such background information influenced the ways of media coverage of the events in Syria. A media war broke out. The Syrian channels tried their best to prove the presence of a "conspiracy and a world war" against Syria where media misleading is used through fabricating events and broadcasting them as truths. Some Arab channels that support the Syrian government policy followed the same course and adopted the Syrian channels as an important source for their news.

Some media like Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, Al-Manar, Syrian Space channel and Al-Akhbariya, exchanged accusations and insults using terms such as: instigating channel, lying channel, tendentious channels, a servant to the enemy, a servant to the devil. It was possible to sort the stance identities of the viewers and know their belongings through the channels they believe. Some journalists resigned because the attitudes of the channels opposed their personal stances. Some channel offices were shut down, the broadcast of some channels was stopped because of the way they covered news in Syria; Addounia Channel<sup>1</sup> for example. This indicates the power and danger of the media influence by creating and directing the public opinion (Al-Baiyoomi, 2017; Janabi, 2016; Mokannawi, 2015; Harahsha, 2013; Shalash, 2013; Leila Vignal, 2012).

This study quantitatively and qualitatively analyzes the news coverage of the Qatari Al-Jazeera Channel and that of the Lebanese Al Manar's of the Syrian crisis as from 2011 to 2013. It is based on Agenda-setting Theory, News Framing Theory and Gatekeeping Theory. The research sample includes news reports which deal with the internal axis of the Syrian crisis; that is what is going on inside Syria. The news report requires the journalist to be objective and to present facts with the highest degree of credibility (Al-Dalou, 1995; Al-Jandoubi, 2010). In this context, I study the

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<sup>1</sup> A private Syrian channel known for being pro-Syrian government. It dedicated a large part of its coverage to exposing what it called "media misleading" exercised by some channels that are anti-Syrian government.

interrelation between the verbal and non-verbal tools employed by the journalist and the channel to explicitly or implicitly express their attitudes towards the events and to convey the propagandas of the conflicting parties. In order to facilitate understanding the content of media messages about the war in Syria and to understand the reasons of the attitudes of the studied channels, explanatory chapters have been added. These include information about the history of Syria and the contexts of the crisis, the history of the channels and their editorial policies, in addition to the rules and methods of propaganda and psychological war.

The research is based on the multidisciplinary approach. The disciplines that were made use of are: information and communication sciences, media sociology, politics, linguistics, history, propaganda and misleading, military sciences, sociology, and religion.

## **Literature Review**

### **- Media and Public Opinion**

Mass media plays an important, if not the most important, role in creating knowledge and forming public opinion and awareness of the key issues as it is considered the first source that tells people what is locally and internationally going on. Not only do media personnel report news, but they also formulate it in ways that produce social and political understanding regardless of its validity. Media reshapes our reality through giving mental images that influence our understanding and behavior towards events (Greg, 2016; Yaylaci, 2015; Willem, 2015; Van Schaik, 2015; BoMeiza, 2007).

Several factors control the process of media reporting of conflicts; therefore, media coverages are constructed in different ways which convey contents of different, and sometimes contrasting, significances of the same event (Kinali, 2013). In order to analyze the process of making news by the media, the political directions and the economic basis of this media have to be taken into consideration (Yaylaci, 2015). People follow media as a means of presenting the truth yet many of them miss the importance of selectivity the journalist practices when framing the news, especially during reporting the events of conflicts. These frames produce the public opinion and, eventually, determine the conduct of societies towards events (Nijenhuis, 2014).

The influence of media on politicians and decision making continually increases so much that it has become impossible to separate the changes in the media scene from those in the political field (Werman, 2015; Abdelmoula, 2012).

Visual knowledge shapes affective and cognitive emotions (Sacco & Gorin, 2017). The visual content has always been the main part of the communication process in many areas. The appearance of digital communication technology has even doubled the role of the visual content and facilitated the process of receiving and grasping information. Therefore, news organizations, government agencies, and businesses are working hard to improve the visual content in order to realize effective communication. In this context, the social media, especially Facebook and

Twitter, has been adopted as means which fulfill the desires of propagandists during conflicts (Seo & Ebrahim, 2016).

The study of (Powell et al, 2015) has shown that images have more effect on the opinions and behaviors of recipients than texts when they are presented aside. However, when texts and images are presented together, the text has more effect on the recipient's views regardless of the content of the image, while the visual content influences the behavioral intention regardless of the content of the text. The communication content creates behaviors emerging from emotion. For example, the furious retort towards the beheading of the western journalists may evoke an international intervention against the Islamic State (ISIS).

### **- The Effect of the Recipients' Connection to the Event on their Evaluation of the Work of Media**

A survey study was done about the opinion of the Swiss public of the news coverage of the French language Swiss press on the war in Syria, especially on emotions provoked by news images of war. The study showed that people look forward to a more profound and comprehensive coverage characterized by objectivity in a way that frames and sources vary especially in the case when the media portrays perpetrators versus victim. The Swiss public experienced three emotional stages during being exposed to news: 1-suffering and pity, 2- identification with the images content, 3- the public constructed their own views of the presented images and of the way they were formed through wondering about the reasons of selecting these frames; the rationality of the image was questioned. The public criticized bias or manipulation by the media (Sacco & Gorin, 2017). I argue that the Swiss public's attitude, reasoning, and criticism of media are related to their physical and psychological remoteness from the events in Syria; they are not deeply interested even if they sympathized with the Syrians. Sympathy here arises from man's ability to project the situations they see or hear of on themselves. The audience's direct connection to the event may prevent them from rational thinking towards what they see and hear through media. This audience is more emotionally than mentally motivated. Therefore, the Syrian recipient who watches the scenes of murder and devastation will be affected by the media messages about the war in Syria in a different way from the Swiss audience. The Syrians may not have the opportunity to practice any logical mental reasoning which investigates the nature of the news sources and frames. Moreover, in the case of the audience who is directly connected to the events, even if they criticized the media mechanism, still they would go on watching, liking and biasing to those which express their tendencies.

The outcomes of Linda Shalash's questionnaire (2013) on the views of the Arab audience about Al-Jazeera's coverage show that the majority of the sample individuals believe that when Al-Jazeera stopped all its programs and exclusively covered footages uploaded on YouTube, Twitter, and opposition sites, it increased the number of its audience. Whereas 12 % of the sample considered that this decreased the credibility of the channel and affected the number of followers.

### **- The Role of Internet in the “Arab Spring”**

The facilities presented by the social media made victims, volunteers and relief organizations consider them as shelters where they can post the contents which they want to convey to people. The NeoMedia has become platforms for presenting the outcomes of wars and catastrophes like Tsunamis (J.Rogstadius et al, 2013).

Many studies have dealt with the role social media and cell phones in the “Arab Spring” and conflicts, some of these are: (Doucet, 2018; Karyotakis et al, 2017; Zeitzoff, 2017; Seo& Ebrahim, 2016; Mast & Hanegreefs, 2015; Pantti & Boklage, 2014; Howard & Hussain, 2013; J.Rogstadius et al 2013 ; Benkirane, 2012; Youmans & York, 2012; Trombetta, 2012; Cottle, 2011). The social media has been the portal where the government opposing activists can post their videos and transmit the live prevailing manifestations of violence, the images of demonstrations, the casualties, the wounded, the military and security operations, and the scenes of devastation. All that would not have been known without the NeoMedia.

People, opposing activists and even some researchers and journalists employed terms such as the Twitter or the Facebook Revolution to signify the importance of the role of NeoMedia in the uprising and success of revolutions in the Arab World (Mahmood et al, 2014). Some people believe that the Syrian war is the most socially mediated in history and this is because of social media (O’Callaghan1 et al, 2014).

The opposing Syrian activists see that the revolution would not have happened or continued without the internet although less than fifth the population had access to the internet in 2011 (Trombetta, 2012).

The appearance of a large number of the Arab bloggers and cyber activists was not sudden, spontaneous or emergent. It was rather an outcome of the accumulation of striving efforts to achieve political and human rights; the traditional media like the radio, the television and the press played a role in preparing the climate for the appearance of the activists in the virtual world – the internet (Benkirane, 2012) .

The “Arab revolutions” changed the form and structure of media (Salaita, 2012). Digital media changed the infrastructures of visual production and circulation (Pantti, 2013). This media proved its ability to influence the tastes, desires and choices of followers who use these communication means (Isani, 2006). The role of social media was not only restricted to reporting and accelerating the events of the opposing movements in the countries of the “Arab Spring” but they also led to creating and accelerating the reactions of several countries on the local and international levels (Benkirane, 2012).

The social communication sites are crucial for mobilization. The revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt inspired the Syrians after they succeeded with the aid of NeoMedia which facilitated the organization of protests and was a main cause of increasing the number of protesters and conveying their targets. Not only did the Syrians imitate the Tunisians and Egyptians use of the social media,

but they also adopted a lot of their slogans the most prominent of which were: “The people want to overthrow the regime” (Kase et al, 2014; Straaten, 2013). The interactive media imposed itself on the Arab public. For instance, the Sudanese spend a quarter of their days following and participating in issues and subjects which they are interested in. 90% of them believe that interactive media is a means of enhancing democracy, strengthening the idea of accepting the other’s views, and constructing effective discussions (F.Hasan, 2017).

#### **- The Effect of Social Media on Policies**

During political crises, the companies of communication technology innovate new applications which are able to attract people, meet their desires and consequently make profits (Howard & Hussain, 2013).

Social media has proved that it is more capable of influencing the public opinion than the traditional political discourse. It is capable of mobilizing the public and directing them to take quick and momentary steps in the context of their political participation (Blounis, 2015). Social media is characterized by its cheapness and the fast spread of information on it. Therefore, it succeeded in realizing political change in the Arab World (Zeitzoff, 2017; Mahmood et al 2014). Its role is clear in democratization. The unity of the forces of internet, the cell phone and the interactive media, has created new methods for telling the political accounts, especially those of change (Howard & Hussain, 2013). The inevitability of the role of social media in the process of democratization should be reconsidered. The historical, social, political, religious and economic characteristics of the societies which use this media have to be studied.

The scholars ought to concentrate on the consequences of the changes brought about by this media, especially in the contexts of wars and conflicts. Analysts, decision makers and even those who work in the security sector have to get engaged in social media in order to grasp the mechanism of propagandists which leads to changing the people to extremism (Zeitzoff, 2017; Thompson, 2012).

Peoples are not the only ones who use the NeoMedia. A lot of countries and politicians do use it as propaganda platforms. The Syrian presidency used Instagram as sociopolitical communication during the years of the Syrian crisis (Holiday & LaBaugh, 2015; Gohdes, 2014). Seo (2016) sees that also dictators have strongly benefited from the means of digital communication after they realized the importance and seriousness of the role they play in influencing the public opinion. More than 75% of the world leaders have active accounts on Twitter and Facebook (Zeitzoff, 2017).

Journalists, scholars, and militants communicate and follow each other on social media (Klausen, 2015). U.S. policy-making during Syria’s crisis was very much influenced by the traditional media and NeoMedia. The images posted on the social media motivated the former

president Barack Obama to announce an air strike against the Syrian government but he rolled back and Trump performed it later. Obama's senior advisors assured the importance of the role which media plays in American political decision making as it exerts pressure on the officials to direct their policies and urge them to make decisions in the favor of the opposition (Doucet, 2018).

The leaders and governments do not use this media to make decisions or attitudes. They rather use it to manipulate the public such as presidents Assad and Vladimir Putin's use of fake accounts through which they try to play with the public opinion (Zeitzoff, 2017).

According to Ahmad Shehabat, the opposition is fighting an unbalanced and unequal war against the regime on both the military and communication levels. Yet, the spread of the opposition's propaganda on the means of social communication had a strong influence on the Syrian government, the citizens, and the international attitudes which showed their support of the opposition. Even the administration of the social media supported the opposition and turned a blind eye to a group of videos and texts which are inconsistent with the rules of these means in order to support the opposition in the face of the Syrian government and its propaganda concerning a global conspiracy. These means also omitted a lot of the comments of the government supporters and closed many pages of theirs (Shehabat, 2013).

The Syrian war changed the components of the media scene in the country and led to the appearance of a substitute media that changed the direction of messages from the top (the authority) to the bottom (the people). The process of producing information has become horizontally oriented as it contained different points of view produced by the communities rather than the authorities. The conflict also led to the rise of media organizations trying to secure international acknowledgement for the journalists and to ensure their freedom in a democratic and pluralistic context. This led the Syrian government to have to change the media scene (Badran1 & Smets, 2018; Issa, 2016).

There is a new generation of social and political activists, educated youth who got engaged in the complicated political processes who formed an important axis in the democratic discourse against the oppressing regimes and demanded social and political changes (Shirazi, 2013).

#### **- Government Censorship in the Time of Social Media**

As a result of the Syrian government's block and censorship on the foreign coverage of the events in Syria, several professional photo journalist clandestinely covered the events in Syria (Pantti, 2013). However, the most important thing was the social media's granting the activists and citizens virtual platforms so that they could face the oppression of the political leaders. This media helped create a collective identity, a resistant one against the dictatorship (Seo & Ebrahim 2016). The numerous numbers of the technologies of communication led to narrowing the chances of the governments to impose censorship on the citizens. While some governments try to block



Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, the activists resort to other means some of which are SMS networks. In addition, hacker communities like Anonymous and Telecomix help the activists to create new software so that they can overcome the blocks set by the state (Howard & Hussain, 2013).

By contrast, what might happen if the governments blocked all forms of communication? The fighters of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the activists and refugees assured their suffering from cutting off communications which causes inability to communicate or post videos continuously as the Syrian government used to block communication in the areas controlled by the opposition combatants (Rohde et al, 2016). The worries of the governments about the power of social communication pushed them to confront the civil activists and arrest a group of bloggers who can be considered as substitutes for the traditional opposition leaders and the charismatic speechmaker because the political uprising in the Arab countries did not have the characteristics of traditional uprising (Pantti & Boklage, 2014; Howard & Hussain, 2013). Despite its blockage of communications several times, the Syrian government was aware of the importance of keeping the virtual existence through the social media; therefore, it employed the Electronic Syrian Army and was careful to the availability of the internet in the areas which were under its control (Gohdes, 2014).

Anita Gohdes (2014) believes that the social media actually worked in the interest of the opposing movements but the blockage of the internet by the regimes, especially in conjunction with military operations against the opposing people, weakens coordination among the opposition forces and does not allow the success of their plans. She also thinks that the murder operations against the civilians took place in conjunction with the internet blockage in order to conceal atrocities. Moreover, she expects that the decrease of military coordination among the opposition forces will certainly lead to the victory of the regime's forces. That the researcher did not take into consideration the Arab and western support of the opposition. The armed opposition obtained very developed communication systems as from the first months of the Syrian crisis. These devices work via satellites. This assures the importance of communication as a weapon in the military battle (Rohde et al, 2016).

Lorenzo Trombetta (2012) sees that the regime's propaganda was prevalent on the traditional media using the same repeated discourse whereas the opposition's thoughts prevailed in the internet and the social media trying to confront the regime's propaganda which utilized censorship for support.

I argue that the way journalists and sometimes researchers portrayed the war in Syria, especially in its first year, as the war of those requesting freedom against the dictator regime is more dangerous than censorship itself. Western news media tried hard to picture Arab uprisings as legal people's movements struggling for freedom and democracy against the oppressing tyrannical regimes (Pantti, 2013). The journalists would make a serious mistake because of their dependence on general perceptions and principles (freedom in the face of dictatorship). Some of them consider

the Arab governments as dictator ones and positively cover the attitudes of all those who oppose them. This is misleading whose catastrophic results may be larger than the hegemony of the ruling regimes. For instance, the outcomes of the religious dictatorship may be much more serious than the political one. The crisis in Syria is not that of two different poles, not only a crisis of freedoms; many factors manipulate its events.

Journalist work is not easy when it has to report events of whose issue the public does not know a lot. It is even more difficult when the journalist is not familiar enough with the language and traditions of the country where the events are taking place. All this affects the strength of the news story and, eventually, the quality of the mental images inserted into the recipient's mind (Storck, 2014). Taking the event's variables into consideration influences the content of the news coverage. For example, in the first three months of the Syrian crisis, the Jordanian journal, Al-Majd, considered all what was happening as a reformist wave which included many Arab countries. However, the same journal later considered what was taking place in Libya and Syria a Zio-American wave and a big conspiracy. It also stated that the events in Syria were different from the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia which targeted freedom and reform (Mokannawi, 2015). Regardless of the validity of the fact that there was a conspiracy or not, the journal tried to cover the crisis in a different way when the influence of plenty of factors, especially the geopolitical ones, on the events was clear.

#### **- The Social Media and the Diaspora**

The NeoMedia increased the potency of the role of diaspora groups in the remote political activity. It is a bridge for linking the opposing people inside and outside their countries. It also unifies their forces in the face of the ruling regimes. The social media helped the immigrant and refugee Syrians and facilitated their participation in the political process. It helped their voices and those of the local activists reach the whole world (Pantti & Boklage, 2014; Pantti, 2013). Through merging the lenses of their cell phones with the social media, amateur journalists and citizen journalists inside and outside Syria could practice self-mediation and confront the aggression of the regime (Pantti & Boklage, 2014).

The Syrian activists in Russia tried to mobilize the Syrians living there and to gain the support of the Russian people. They also attempted to exercise media pressure on the Russian officials so that they might control their decisions and activities (Pantti & Boklage, 2014) .

There must be a unification of the capacities of the social and traditional media in order that they can realize the optimal targets. The success of the activists on the social media is bound by the support of the traditional media as the latter is able to promote their thoughts rapidly and professionally. Pantti and Boklage (2014) who assure that the government-opposing people availed themselves of the virtual platforms on the internet to a great extent but their success was strongly connected to unifying their efforts with television channels and anti-Syrian government media such as Shaam News Network. Russian-Syrian diaspora took a remote part in the political

process but the traditional Russian media blocked their activity and did not spotlight it which diminished the volume of their influence (Pantti & Boklage, 2014).

The emotions and feelings of the opposing activists inside and outside the country differ. This is reflected in the content of their discourse on the social media. Despite the virtual participation in the political process, the Syrian diaspora do not suffer the circumstances and difficulties of the war. In contrast to the situation of the Syrians in Syria, who face difficulties and chaos of all forms, the Syrians abroad take part in the political activity yet without direct physical suffering or risk (Pantti & Boklage, 2014).

#### **- The Most Prominent Applications, the Difference of Content in relation to the Difference of Means**

Studies on the ratio of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube's contribution to the events of uprisings differ. However, they agree on the inevitability of their contribution to reporting events and to the search for the international support of the opposition. The study of Deen Freelon et al (2013) shows that Twitter represented an important arena and an effective area during and after "the Arab Spring". The opposers and supporters of Assad relied on Twitter for their political activities. However, the study of the content of the interviews with the combatants of FSA, activists and refugees assured that Twitter was not the mostly used means that helped them convey their voices to the world. Its influence was too limited (Rohde et al, 2016). YouTube, Facebook and Twitter were of the most promoting means (Kase et al, 2014). Yet, YouTube and the cell phone lens outdid these means in reporting the events in Syria to the audience all over the world (Howard & Hussain, 2013).

Studies that were interested in the numerical significance of hashtags on Twitter searched the number of mentioning a group of words or phrases which were used to express the opposing movements in the Arab World. It also searched the numbers of those who shared these hashtags and those who reacted to them. This assures the importance of social media in constructing the public opinion on issues of public interest (Bruns et al, 2013).

The messages on social media differ according to the nature of the events themselves and the type of the means. For example, after the revolution in Libya, Facebook highlighted the ideas that deal with the role of the attitudes and demands of the active local politicians. Libyan Youth Movement page on Twitter gave priority to issues different from those of its page on Facebook. Not only did it cover issues concerning the reconstruction of Libya and performing political and economic reforms, but it also highlighted the feelings and aspirations of the public especially concerning the civil rights in Libya after the revolution (Biswas & Sipes, 2014).

### **- Merging Social Media with Traditional Media**

Jalal Ziada (2015) thinks that traditional media could successfully cope with digital technology and merge it in the process of making the media content. Social media led to changing the media scene in the world (Mahmood et al, 2014). In the context of covering the events of the “Arab Spring”, several local, international and transnational channels of which are Al-Jazeera, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and China Daily based their news on the database spread on the pages of social media (Karyotakis et al, 2017). NeoMedia is an important element in forming the news, especially when traditional field reports from correspondents are unavailable (Eskjær, 2012). New York Times sought help from the videos of the activist Syrian citizens which led to the appearance of a new media pattern, the Collaborative News Clip, where the ordinary citizen produces media contents that basically depend on the sentimental enticement of the recipient (Wall & Zahed, 2014).

The long period and the complications of the war in Syria influenced the way the west media covered the events; it used to avoid sending journalists for the coverage. This led to the change of social media into the arena of production of eyewitness videos and photos and user-generated content by citizen journalists (Sacco & Gorin, 2017). The visual coverage of the Syrian crisis has been characterized by the merging of NeoMedia with the traditional one. The merging of non-professional eyewitness footage with the professional sources has created a new type in the process of visual production. Mass media resorted to the help of the citizen journalist and primarily relied on the video footages, the texts and the tweets of the opposing activists. This applies to a large group of countries some of which are Belgium, Finland, Italy, Spain, Romania and the United Kingdom (Sacco & Gorin, 2017; Van Leuven et al, 2015; Pantti, 2013; Klausen, 2015; Pantti, 2015). The optimistic opinion of this merging sees that the use of NeoMedia in articulating news may lead to the emergence of international coverage and balanced one in terms of the diversity of sources and views towards the same event (Van Leuven et al, 2013).

The phenomenon of the citizen videographer enabled traditional media to perform live coverage and enabled some decision makers to react momentarily and simultaneously to all what happens of murder and violence. However, traditional journalists had to rely on the experienced activists for what was going on inside Syria in order to achieve a good selectivity process of the contents uploaded by the citizen journalist. Traditional media helped the voice of the Syrian activists reach the world (Wall & Zahed, 2014).

The Syrian opponents see that even the regime’s traditional media was in need of modernizing and developing the means and methods of propaganda; that’s why the regime was obliged to resort to the help of social media, photographers and amateur activists. On the other hand, the amateur opponent activists had to turn into professional in traditional channels through selecting authenticated sources and making the coverage has clear credibility (Trombetta, 2012).

The traditional media was extremely dependent on interactive media which weakened reliability and verification that should be established in the process of drafting the content. The media process became inaccurate and void of verifiable journalistic reports (Sacco & Gorin, 2017; Varghese, 2013). The study of Mast and Hanegreefs (2015), of the war in Syria from 2011 to 2012, shows that the images produced by Syrian citizens formed a very valuable source for the Flemish media. This led to merging different visual framings of the war in Syria. However, it simultaneously caused the coverage lose its transparency and credibility to some extent due to the presence of unverifiable sources and undocumented excerpts as well. Dutch and Flemish journalists covering the Syrian conflict did not rely on trustworthy sources nor did they achieve a sufficient degree of an emotional-moral distance (Johansson, 2017).

In addition to dependence on social media, there is another important factor which controls the process of formulating the content. The media economics controls the process of adopting the sources as each media allocates a limited budget to foreign news reporting. In order to know what is happening in Syria and due to the difficulty of access there, some media organizations adopted a very few numbers of specialized people who would visit the region a few times during different periods of time. While other media relied on generalists or sometimes on one or even two permanent correspondents (Vandevoordt, 2015).

The quantitative content analysis of Sarah Van Leuven et al (2015) studies the diversity of sources in Belgian newspaper and TV news coverage of the events in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria in 2011. The results show that journalists held onto traditional sourcing practices in the coverage of the events of Tunisia and Egypt while in the case of Syria, they resorted to network journalism practices. In many cases the Belgian journalists did not seek the user-generated content on social media. They rather used to copy the activists' video footages from international news agencies or TV stations such as CNN and BBC. In other words, these journalists left the task of investigating and cross-checking the news to other agencies and news stations.

Our perception of reality no longer depends on mono-spectral imaging. Social media and blogs have put an end to the selectivity of the journalists who choose what they want and throw the rest (Welbers, 2016). However, there is another point of view. The research of Madeline Storck (2014) which studies the relation between professional and citizen journalists found that witness testimonies are also subject to Gatekeeping where those who are responsible for the communication process select definite sounds to be re-mediated. Moreover, the process of selecting the frames remained subject to the decision of professional journalists, and eventually, the citizen journalists' work was limited to pumping the information into the channels' filters.

Depending on social media does not necessarily mean achieving freedom and giving way to the voices of the activists who represent different trends. The journalists are still gatekeepers as they select, accept, refuse and exclude the materials produced by these activists. The Syrian crisis assured and highlighted the role of the gatekeeper and made studying and understanding the

visualization of the war a necessary thing to know how media constructs mental images about crises and wars (Pantti, 2015).

According to Steve Paulussen and Raymond Harder (2014), several researches tackled the role of social media as sources of traditional media in certain events such as catastrophes, elections or crises. However, there are no researches that deal with journalists' daily follow-up and dependence on social media beyond the scope of remarkable events.

### **- Criticizing Exaggerating the Positive Role of Social Media**

The role of communication technology is intrinsically conflicting. It could lead to successes and progress on many levels while it may be a cause of the spread of chaos and violence on others. It might cause successful revolutions which achieve freedom, justice and dignity or bring about the superiority and control of extremists (Benkirane, 2012).

There is a skeptic opinion about the role of social media and internet in the opponent Arab movements. In order to make sure of this, one has to prove the fact that revolutions could not have happened without this media. A tremendous accumulated amount of information and discussions may contribute to discouraging individuals to move rather than inciting them to do that. In contrast, some criticize these suspicious thoughts about the role of media. These skeptic people did not appreciate the role of media in making the voices of the oppressed people reach out as they were able to access each other and unite their word and behavior against the ruling regimes. NeoMedia opened the way for a different intellectual production based on unfiltered communication for people who have different and diverse political, cultural, economic and social horizons and visions which leads to attaining a change that can be radical on all local and international levels (Joseph, 2012).

The positive role of the social media in the "emancipation" movements and their development as saviors of peoples would be exaggerated. Some emphasize the contribution of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs and Instagram to creating organized civil resistance (Shirazi, 2013). This could be true, but it cannot be generalized to cover all communities. In the Syrian case, social media was not an arena of organized civil resistance for a long time. It soon changed into platforms calling for armament and transmitting video footages about the activities of the military opposition. This accelerated and reinforced the split of the Syrian society into supporters and opponents. It also led to dividing opposition itself into a large number of factions and platoons. Social media turned into real war arenas whose tools are words and images and the most prominent of whose ways is hacking the opponents' pages. It is important to study the level of awareness and intellectual freedom of the public demanding political freedom. It is, moreover, important to know the level of the influence of religion – especially Islam – on the process of understanding and perceiving the social and political reality. Some studies highlight the danger of social media especially when ISIS started to employ this technology and exploit it in order to frighten the Arab

regimes and the western countries through showing footages that contain the scenes of beheading Arabs and western people (Seo & Ebrahim, 2016; Blounis, 2015).

### **- News Frames and War**

Robin Vandevoordt (2015) sees that it is necessary to study the structural status and editorial identity of the media organizations. These control the mechanism and attitudes of journalists towards the events which are being covered. It is also necessary to take into consideration the social background and the affiliations of the journalists as these determine and influence their selection of frames.

Media is blamed because of calling for and promoting the frames of war more than those of peace. Journalists overlook the fact that the public may be interested in the news of peace more than those of war. Basma Atassi (2015) sees that press oscillates between being profession and business; it simultaneously seeks to earn money and convey news to people. In order not to be exposed to misleading and manipulation, we should recognize the purpose of each media. Johan Galtung, one of the founders of peace studies, sees that ‘war journalism’ pivots and concentrates on differences, conflicts and violence among societies and groups, while it neglects the frames of the reasons and results of these wars (Nijenhuis, 2014). Social media could be a substitute to traditional one in presenting the disastrous outcomes of wars. In the context of the events of the “Arab Spring”, the NeoMedia was full of images portraying the results of war and the suffering of people, especially after the mass massacres like the chemical aggression on the civilians (Seo & Ebrahim, 2016). Concerning the war in Syria, mass media played a big role in shifting and moving the events from peacefulness to violence owing to its selectivity of the negatively provocative frames of the recipients’ feelings regardless of their political affiliation. The sensitivity of the Syrian crisis emerges from the interlacing and complications of variants. This influenced the media’s portrayal of events. The coverage of this crisis requires accurate research of the manner in which the media frames events, selects and employs the images which influence the recipient public who build their understanding of events on basis of the messages of this media (Sacco & Gorin, 2017).

In the context of war coverage, the images of victims are considered the strongest influential thing on the recipient due to their ability to create a feeling of sympathy and pain-sharing (Powell et al, 2015). This especially happens when tortured children are shown because these images can often be the primary stimulus of the humanistic campaigns and activities. However, the visual frames which media and humanistic organizations adopt narrowly showed human suffering during wars. For example, they created stereotypical images such as the scene of the mother and the child or that of the only child. It is true that these visual contents influence the humanistic feelings but they diminish the true reality of the human suffering during wars (Fehrenbach & Rodogno, 2015).

Portraying refugees as groups has been repeated and sometimes, iconic images like a homeless child with his mother have been highlighted. The exaggeration in presenting images of young kids

may make the recipient feel that the sender is manipulating him through stimulating a sentimental response in the interest of the refugees (Van Schaik, 2015).

The limitedness or similarity of frames apply to other themes as well. The study of Jan Boesman et al (2015) about the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium press in covering the news of the Belgian combatants in Syria, shows that the selected frames were not modern yet similar to the frames which cover the same area, that is there is a basic point which these journals depended on.

#### **- The Effect of the Type of the Means on the Content**

The content analysis study by Tara Lackey (2015) concerning the coverage of the Syrian crisis in the American media assures that newspapers had better media quality than TV, especially in selecting the themes frames and the way of processing them in addition to larger quantity of sources. This made the coverage of the press, especially that of the elite, seem more thoughtful and fact-based in reporting than TV when it comes to foreign news events. This result supports that of Sacco and Gorin (2017) who considers TV less trustworthy than print media which led to deteriorating the confidence of the public.

The news magazines and the public affairs ones highlighted the frames of conflict and victims in their coverage of the Syrian crisis between 2011 and 2012. However, the public affairs magazines shed more light on photographs depicting peace framing (Greenwood & Jenkins, 2015).

#### **- The Frames Are Influenced by the Policies of the Countries**

There is a strong relation between the public relations of Obama's Administration and the trend of the western media coverage of the American foreign policy about the situation in Syria. The American attitude through the adopted agenda by the public relations of Obama's Administration influenced the UN's decisions and the media's mechanism, way of coverage and attitudes towards the Syrian crisis. This assures the importance and role of the policy of prior establishing of agendas by using the force of the discourse characteristics (Lehimdjian, 2016).

Mass media controls what and how we think. Not only does it control the thoughts which are immersed into our minds but also the mechanism of their immersing. The differences in the ways of covering the mass media of the Syrian crisis certainly emerge from the geopolitical involvement of the governments. Each media reflects the viewpoint of its national government (Godefroidt et al, 2016).

The process of news formatting is affected by the media's relationship with the event and its closeness to it. This is what the analysis of Judith Nijenhuis (2014) assures concluding that the media of intervening countries adopted more war frames than that of the non-intervening ones. Social variants, the closeness to the event and the relationship with it, and the media establishment ideological agenda which is connected to the agendas of the political actors form the most important factors which control the news selection practices of the following channels: The Iranian Al-Alam TV, (foreign Arabic language TV stations), Russia Today, Deutsche Welle, and BBC (Al-Rawi, 2017).



Al-Jazeera and FOX News channels did not cover the government opposing events in many Arab countries objectively. The secret stimuli and submission to the policy of the ruling administrations which govern the media process in these establishments led to portraying events in a way different from reality. Al-Jazeera covered the events provoked by the attitudes of the ruling family. Fox News covered these movements in a way that copes with the opinions and trends of the conservative and religious public who oppose Obama's approach (Alalawi, 2015).

The American media's positive coverage of the Arab Spring drew attention to the process of demonizing Arabs which was taking place for a long time. This does not mean that the coverage of the Arab uprisings changed the American way of presenting the Arabs in media. Steven Salaita (2012) sees that the social and political circumstances in the Arab countries are the reason which imposed review on the American media. This media's coverage of events was linked to the interests of the USA and to its vision of the situation in the Arab countries. It also showed the desire of the American administration to keep its control over the Arab world.

Driven by their interests and general concerns, western and Israeli media adopted the frame of intimidation of the unknown future, the possibility of the spread of chaos, and the arrival of the extremist radicals to power (Shihade et al, 2012). Media bias arising from political affiliations and visions towards what is happening in the Arab world was predominant (Matthew et al, 2013) .

Some studies analyzed the form of the coverage such as the number of materials, the mean length and so on. The study of Rawan and Imran (2013) analyzed materials that were published from 15 March 2011 to 14 March 2012 in Khaleej Times and The New York Time. The results showed differences in terms of the number of published stories whereas the mean length of editorials was similar. Both newspapers were against president Al Assad but they were based in this attitude on the predominant political and cultural affiliations. This means that the attitude towards Assad was the same but the reasons were different. Khaleej Times presented the conflict as a confrontation against the oppressing regime while the demonstrators were presented as victims. The New York Time presented the conflict as a struggle between the victims and dictatorship.

From 2013 to 2014, Al-Quds Palestinian newspaper paid quantitative attention to the Syrian crisis while the Israeli Yediot Aharonot paid qualitative attention to it. Al-Quds concentrated on the Palestinian-Syrian relations and on the humanitarian dimension while Yediot Aharonot concentrated on the security dimension, the diligence of Israel on the security of its northern borders, and the probable outcomes of the Syrian crisis on Israel. The Israeli press sided with the groups of the Syrian opposition and expressed its fear of the interference of Hezbollah and its support of the Syrian government. It also repeatedly reminded the recipient of the long enmity between Israel and the Syrian regime. The attitude of this newspaper changed by time. In the beginning, it demanded the fall of the regime, but later it called for keeping it for fear of the coming of the extremist groups, especially ISIS, to power. It reminded of the security danger of this thing (Salahuddeen, 2015).

The study of Michael Bruce (2014) showed that the coverage of Al-Jazeera, Al-Jazeera English, Al-Arabiya, Alhurra, and BBC Arabic of the events of many countries of the Arab Spring were similar in terms of the application of the human-interest frame while they were strongly different about political frame. Alhurra channel resorted to this frame more than Al-Jazeera and BBC Arabic. The interest of Alhurra in the political frame reflects the interest of the USA in the region and its strong bonds with many governments which are targeted by the uprising peoples. The content also coped with the American policy and its trends. However, the most prominent frame even in the coverage of Alhurra was the humanitarian one by a ratio of 57.7 %. I argue that we cannot always separate frames and analyze them in this way. They may not give accurate indications. A channel may not highlight the political frame but it implies it in all the other frames. For instance, in order to prove the barbarity of communism, the media may adopt a lot of frames like the humanitarian, the economic and that of responsibility yet the target of all these frames could be political. I refer to the implied frame which contains the clear external frames which can only be uncovered through accurate analysis processes that study the relationship among all the significances of the messages and contexts of media.

Concerning the framing of the Russian intervention in Syria by RT and Radio Liberty, the Russian media was different from the English in several issues the most prominent of which are: civil war, Counter-terror operation, Responsibility and Humanitarian frame, Diagnostic and Prognostic frames. However, the main difference was about responsibility. RT strongly conveyed the Russian government's propaganda through depending on the Russian officials as main resources of coverage (Imamgaiazova, 2016). The existence of NeoMedia obliged traditional media to change its ways of tackling event during crises. Absolute obscuring of events is no longer possible. However, this media innovated ways through which it can trick the recipient in order to meet the objectives of the propagandist. One of these ways is reducing the importance and seriousness of the event in comparison with what the opposing channels present. This is what the study of James Brown (2015) assures. This study shows that the Russian media's coverage of the events of Ghouta in Damascus talked about the importance of this news but avoided mentioning the great number of casualties. In order to study any news coverage of war, it is not enough to search how often the mentioning or the numbers of casualties have been repeated but the contexts where this takes place. The mentioning of casualties is only a propagandist weapon the target of which is political rather than humanitarian, but it exploits the humanitarian dimension to cause a great effect in the interest of a political aim. This verification gives us the chance to recognize the side who benefits from these frames.

The nationalization frame followed by responsibility and conflict frames dominated the coverage of *le Figaro*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *New York Times*, and the *Moscow Times* before and after the chemical aggression on 21 August 2013. Despite the danger of using this weapon and its grievous results, the moral frames, human interest and the economic consequences were rare in the media process. It did not present solutions to the crisis within logical contexts based on the real

situation. These solutions were rather presented in a way that copes with the suggestions of governments (Godefroidt et al, 2016).

The American press allotted a larger area for covering the Syrian crisis than the one allotted by le Figaro and the Daily Telegraph. This reflects the political role of president Obama who manages negotiations and the process of searching possible solutions with the French and the British (Godefroidt, 2016).

### **- The Most Prominent Frames and Trends in Covering the Syrian Crisis**

Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya took a supporting position of the regime's opponents and presented the events as a movement to achieve freedom and democracy confronted by the dictator power of the regime through murder and violence (Al-Baiyoomi, 2017, Janabi, 2016; Kinali, 2013).

Al-Jazeera and BBC framed the conflict in Syria similarly with some differences about framing Jabhat Al-Nusra and ISIS. Both channels assured that the dictatorship of the regime and the laws pressing the people were the reason why the events erupted in Syria. They also assured that the violent security reaction of the Syrian government led to spreading the conflict and widening it to include other regions, that the opposition is protecting the people, and that it is victorious. In the frame of responsibility, the two channels blamed the government forces and considered them murderers of the people (Salih, 2014)

Mikkel Fugl Eskjær (2012) studied the coverage of the Danish press in the first months of the crisis employing quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the themes and sources namely of the journalist existence in the region. The results point out that the newspapers kept in mind the pre-crisis prevailing vision about a group of themes such as the relation between Islam and democracy, the Arab Israeli conflict, and the ability of the Arab communities to achieve actual reforms.

The study of Minos-Athanasios Karyotakis (2017) shows that China Daily and Al-Jazeera concentrated on public affairs, the Civil unrest, while BBC highlighted public affairs, civil unrest and human interest. It also allotted a wide area to express the political agendas of the actors.

Some researches paid attention to analyzing the content of the propaganda of the conflicting parties which spread on the pages of social media. Seo and Ebrahim (2016) studied the content of images on the main pages of president Assad and the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces from April 2013 to September 2014. The pages of president Assad presented him as a fearless strong man who depends for his attitudes on the people's support and the strength of the relationship with the foreign allies. The pages of president Assad avoided the images of war and held those whom they called terrorists wholly responsible. They assured the role of Assad in protecting the country from them. On the other hand, the images on the pages of the opponent coalition were mainly about the threats of the enemy, the losses of civilians, unity and victory. These pages also adopted the religious discourse in order to mobilize people and motivate them to

perform some actions against the government's violence. They also shed light on the economic problems like homelessness and hunger.

The study of Michael and Conlin (2016) showed that these transnational media: Al-Jazeera, Al-Jazeera English, Al-Arabiya, Alhurra, and BBC Arabic did not concentrate on the frame of conflict during covering the crisis. The researcher justifies this by the existence of possible fear of a violent people's reaction. I suppose that the contrary is true. This media provoked people, stimulated them and created violent reactions. To verify this, there must be a study of the verbal and non-verbal significances and the contexts of each significance regardless of the traditional classifications of frames. The Rhetorical Discourse Analysis of "the Opposite Direction" program, which is transmitted on Al-Jazeera channel, from 2011 to 2012 shows that the channel concentrated on the following themes: militarizing the revolution and accepting the military interference, overthrowing the regime and dismantling the army, convergence between the Syrian regime and the Israeli enemy, purposelessness of nationalist thought and resistance, and remanufacturing the enemy. Israel was substituted by Iran. Al-Jazeera's rhetoric discourse facilitates the process of the recipient's acceptance of the idea of overthrowing the regime with all its establishments not only its persons. The channel assured that it was impossible for the Syrian people to solve their issues through peaceful ways and pointed out militarizing the revolution with misty and vague concepts (Harahsha, 2013).

In many cases, the media never reflects the vision of communities towards issues. For instance, there is a very big difference between what media promotes as a solution to the Syrian crisis and what the Syrian people think. According to a questionnaire in 2015, the Syrians thought that the diplomatic solution of the crisis was the optimal one, whereas the media strongly promoted and called for the military one and presented it as a people's choice (Kamal, 2017). The media presented the crisis as a conflict between the good and the bad people. It was and still is promoting the necessity of humanitarian interference but in the form of military war. This media absented the actual danger which the countries taking part in the war will suffer from (Greg, 2016).

The study of Basma Atassi (2015) showed that the media which supported the Syrian government and that which opposed it neglected the attitudes of the antagonist and did not give it the chance to appear. The coverage was one sided. This media as a whole did not highlight the suffering of the residents of Damascus before and after the peace initiative in Barza.

Neither did Western media tackle the situations in the areas controlled by the Syrian government nor did it allocate space for the views of the Syrians who support the president. On the contrary, the Russian and Syrian media covered the events in the areas controlled by the Syrian government and presented the opposition as terrorists but they did not concentrate on the human casualties resulting from the Russian and Syrian bombardment (Doucet, 2018). It is necessary to study the contexts where the pro-Syrian government channels withheld the news of the human casualties because withholding here does not necessarily mean not mentioning this detail. It rather

means putting it in the contexts which serve the government's propaganda. For example, instead of its being about murdered people because of the government bombardment, the news would mention the victory of the Syrian army on the terrorists and killing large numbers of them. Here the media mentions the casualties due to bombardment, but it legalizes this military action.

The Syrian crisis is characterized by the participation of kids on the field and media levels. S. Layla (2013) believes that the kids in Syria took a significant part in the democratic social movements. The uprising erupted in Daraa by children who wrote statements on the walls threatening Assad. Then they were faced violently. They were present in most of the demonstrations all over Syria side by side with the adults. I have not found research studying the media coverage of kids except for highlighting them as victims of war. Therefore, this point is going to be one of the pivots of this study.

### **- Visual and Rhetoric Frames**

There is a strong relationship between selecting words and ideology in the context of the media coverage of the events in Syria. The terminology employed to describe the Syrian crisis was strongly different in the Iranian, Saudi and Turkish press. The ideology of each country controlled the mechanism of media. Manipulation of the recipient's mind is performed through inserting ideologies into the language of media. The readers may get deformed unreal images about the events and this certainly influences their understanding and visions. The ideologized media discourse is able to change, reverse, reinforce, produce and reproduce facts. For example, overstating positive side of realities and under-stating negative side of realities presents facts in a way different from what they really are (Amin & Jalilifar, 2013) .

The Syrian presidency realized the necessity of targeting audience through media so it adopted Instagram in 2013 in order to address two different audiences: Arabic speaking and English speaking. The qualitative analytic approach by Steven Holiday et al (2015) shows that the Syrian presidency had addressed the two types of audience equally when it discussed the themes of youth, social support and religion. However, clear differences were noticed in the visual rhetoric of patriotism and nationalism where the English-speaking audience was more targeted. As if the Syrian presidency was attempting to introduce Syria as a strong and unified country. However, the discourse of arousing sympathy prevailed in the messages addressing the Arab audience.

The official Syrian newspapers attached importance to slogans. The slogan of "The People Want Bashar Al Assad" was the full-page headline of Al-Baath newspaper on 30 March 2011. This means that this newspaper which had represented Al-Baath Party for long decades changed its stiff language and used one of the most prominent slogans of the Arab Spring, namely "The People Want to Overthrow the Regime" (Trombetta, 2012). One of the targets of this research is analyzing the significances of the slogans which the channels highlight and the contexts in which they are presented.

Critical discourse analysis by Kais Kadhim (2018) studies the ways of presenting the image of the Syrian government and the opponents in the pro-government Syrian online news; *Cham press*. The outcomes reveal that the media ruling ideology controls the process of selecting the words. Therefore, the opposition was described with negative words such as: terrorism, the universal conspiracy and groups against the law, while the government was described with positive words like: victorious, the protector, the savior . The study also disclosed that *Cham press* adopted the terms used by Assad in his interviews or speeches.

Analyzing the discourse of president Bashar Al-Assad with TV news networks and international press reveals that president Assad disapproved the Syrian identity of the opposition as he considered all the opponents external mercenaries who belong to Al Qaida and spread its ideology which form danger on the region and international security. According to him, opposition works for an external conspiracy the aim of which is achieving the interests of foreign countries in Syria and the Arab Home (Merz, 2014).

#### **- Coverage of the Chemical Aggression**

Some studies tackled the media coverage of certain themes and “prominent events” like the chemical attack on Ghouta in Damascus (Greg, 2016). The study of Dinerstein Anton (2015) depended on the framing analysis to study the coverage of the privately owned newspapers (*the Financial Times* and *the Kommersant*) of the chemical aggression on Ghouta on 21 August 2013. The study of James Brown (2015) compares the Russian media coverage with the coverage of the USA, UK, and France of the chemical attack on Ghouta in Damascus. The results showed big differences between the Russian media and the others in terms of selecting the frames and the sources. The essential reason of these differences is the political culture of each country and the difference of criteria and visions. The differences mainly pivoted on style of reporting, determining responsibility and estimating the stimuli, and portraying the role of Russia and the western forces.

Russia concentrated on justifying its attitudes and its interference in the Syrian affairs. In spite of its different party affiliations, Russian media is characterized by common points which unite it about the coverage of the Syrian crisis. This may be attributed to the lack of media freedom. Through its interference in the Syrian affairs, Russia presents itself as the primary defender of countries’ independence and sovereignty in the face of America. While the western media was stating the inevitable readiness of the dictator regime to launch a chemical aggression, the Russian media was slow and wondered about the necessity of taking such a step and about the timing of this event and its contexts (Brown, 2015). ETV’s position was neutral and it did not charge the regime of murdering people with the chemical weapon (Salih, 2014).

In their coverage of the chemical aggression, The Washington Post, The New York Times and the Lebanese newspapers depended on the officials as sources. They chiefly concentrated on the conflict frame and the diplomatic efforts of many countries to solve the crisis. Quantitatively, the Lebanese newspapers allotted a larger area for the crisis stories. The Lebanese newspapers sided

the parties which own them but their coverage was more thematic than that of those of the USA. The American newspapers were based on the frame of moralities and described the chemical aggression as a war crime whereas the Lebanese newspapers did not adopt this frame on the same level. The Lebanese newspapers seemed as if they had been desensitized, maybe due to the frequency of crises and wars for several years. The Lebanese newspapers depended on the views of the foreign officials while those of USA restricted themselves to the opinions of the American officials. This indicates that the coverage of the Lebanese newspapers is a reflection of an “international” view while those of the USA reflect the perspective of the USA only (Cozma & Kozman, 2018).

The study of Dianne Akkerhuis (2013) displayed that BBC, in its coverage of using the chemical weapon, adopted perspective of the Syrian civilians and victims while CNN highlighted the viewpoints of the Syrian and American peoples together. Al-Arabiya strongly embraced the perspective of the Free Syrian Army. However, Al-Jazeera covered the positions of the international community, the Syrian community and relatively the attitudes of the Syrian regime. The channels ways of covering the theme of using the chemical weapon by the pro-Assad soldiers differed. BBC concentrated on the idea of the Syrian regime’s use of the chemical weapon against the people while CNN highlighted Obama’s political attitudes towards the Syrian regime. Al-Arabiya channel held Hezbollah responsible for bombarding the civilians with the chemical weapon. Al-Jazeera concentrated on the possibility of using the chemical weapon in the Syrian war and on the possible international reactions to this matter.

Concerning the selection of sources, BBC employed many sources except the sources of the Syrian government. Moreover, the footages may be considered unreliable as they are produced by local residents. The coverage of BBC was classified as subjective. The coverage of CNN on the face of it seemed objective but the results disclosed that it was subjective. Al-Arabiya channel was subjective to a great extent especially when it depended on vague and unknown sources and adopted words and metaphors that had several explanations. Al-Jazeera was classified as objective because it depended on diverse sources and quotes that include the views of the conflicting parties (Akkerhuis, 2013). The dependence of the channels on sources of diverse tendencies and quotes which include the views of all the conflicting parties is not enough to make them objective. It is quite important to study many verbal and non-verbal significances embraced in the contexts which deal with the different views. The implicit aim of mentioning a declaration of a military leader in the Syrian army could be mocking the government’s propaganda. So, this is one of the targets of our research: studying the contexts of mentioning the perspectives of the conflicting parties.

The concentration of research on “prominent events” such as the chemical aggression makes the value of casualties connected with that of the weapons used against them. It also links the importance of the international movements and positions to the “non-daily events”. I do not deny the danger of using chemical weapon but killing is killing whatever the weapon is. On basis of this

principle, I see that our research should focus on the daily details of the Syrian crisis and consider each event of it a “prominent event”.

### **- Covering Asylum and Refugees**

The study of Rebecca Wallace (2018) searches the coverage of eight Canadian English-speaking newspapers of the crisis of Syrian refugees from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2016. The research proves that the news frames greatly changed throughout the conflict and before and after the federal elections in Canada. Before the elections the conflict frame predominated the news. However, it changed into humanitarian frame and sentimental enticements in the interest of the refugees after the spread of the image of three-year-old Kurdish kid Alan, who became an icon and a tool to attract people’s emotions in the interest of the refugees. During and after the elections, the theme of repatriating and integrating the Syrian refugees became the dominant frame.

The western media suffers from double standards. When it described the situation in Syria, the Mainstream Western media focused on the frame of human tragedy especially for the part concerning children’s news (Doucet, 2018). However, this soon changed when it was about the refugees coming to the European countries. These refugees were often described as a danger on security, economy and the stability of the host countries (Zeher Abid et al, 2017). Although the non-government organizations and newspapers discussed the issue of refugees in 2015, there is considerable shortage in tackling and framing this theme. In addition, editors select dimensions and details that lead to influencing policies towards the theme of refugees. People only know about the refugees through the images they see in the media (Hoyer, 2016; Van Schaik, 2015) .

The coverage of Fox News and CNN of the situations of the refugees needs adopting more diverse and more accurate sources. The frames were selected to meet the agendas and desires of media to attract the audience and persuade them (Campanella, 2017).

The coverage of the Austrian newspapers of the issues of refugees from 2015 to 2016 was characterized by stressing the frame of security and economic threats more than focusing on the humanitarian frame and the basic information about the situation of the refugees. This coverage contributed to deterring the integration of refugees into the Austrian community (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). The position of Sweden towards the theme of refugees and receiving them is considered the most positive one (Berry et al, 2015). The victimization frame portrays the need of refugees to help as they suffer from circumstances beyond their will and ability to solve the crisis (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017).

The frames of covering the Syrian refugees by the British newspapers are not similar. The Guardian and The Telegraph covered the events in different ways that cope with their political trends. The left-leaning, The Guardian, strongly adopted a welcoming attitude towards the Syrian refugees and sustained this position even after chaos spread and many aggressions happened. On the other hand, the right-leaning The Telegraph had an utterly different attitude. It did not welcome



the refugees, and this attitude became even stronger from 2015 to 2016 (Tavassoli & Jalilifar, 2019).

The neutrality of the non-host countries of refugees and the big geographical distances that separate them from Syria must lead to neutral and objective media coverage concerning the theme of the refugees in comparison with that of the host ones. Studies indicate that the refugees host countries use more metaphors than the non-host ones (Zeher Abid et al, 2017).

The Jordanian newspapers were not interested in the issues of the Syrian refugees despite their being part of the region. Most of the contexts which dealt with the theme of the Syrian refugees were about the help they get from Jordan and the other countries (Al-Mazahra, 2016). In general, the content of the Turkish audience messages about the refugees on Twitter was positive which reflects the image of the host people (Öztürka & Ayvazb, 2018) . During the interviews, the feelings and attitudes of the Americans towards the refugees varied and contradicted. Some welcomed them and considered helping them something necessary out of humanitarian stimuli. However, the others expressed their worries about the economic outcomes because receiving a large number of refugees may influence the jobs occupied by the Americans in addition to the big danger resulting from receiving individuals who belong to extremist terrorist organizations (Yigit, 2017). The different ways in which media covered the war in Syria created a crisis in determining “the identity of the Syrian crisis”. On one hand, the interlacing variants were simplified and the problem was presented as a conflict between activists demanding freedom and a dictator regime. On the other hand, the activists were presented as terrorists whose coming and shaking security and stability frighten countries.

### **- Media and Terrorism**

As from its beginning, the Syrian crisis attracted foreign combatants who came from several regions all over the world. As from 2012, a lot of volunteers from North Caucasian origins formed an international nucleus of Mujahedeen to which “believers” in the Islamic issue and in defending Muslims can join. The Arab and international reactions about the intervention of “Mujahedeen” in the Syrian crisis varied. Some welcomed the participation and others considered the practices of combatants extreme violence and terrorism. The appearance of other fighting groups which came to the region to take part in the war in Syria led to creating conflicts and bloody dissensions among the “Jihadi” groups (Souleimanov, 2014).

The study of Talal Alshathry (2015) about the coverage of Al-Jazeera and CNN of ISIS from June to October 2014 discloses that the coverage of both channels was episodic. CNN shed light on the conflict frame while Al-Jazeera adopted the responsibility and economic-consequences framing. As for the sources, CNN depended on American officials, while Al-Jazeera depended on other media. It focused on the danger of ISIS and its control on Syrian areas, whereas CNN concentrated on the relationship between ISIS and Al Qaeda and on geopolitics frame (Zhang &

Hellmueller, 2016). According to different results, Al-Jazeera took a positive position of the Free Syrian Army, ISIS and Al-Nusra altogether (Salih, 2014) .

The image of the Syrian opposition suddenly and shockingly changed from moderate to Al Qaeda-linked groups in the content of a lot of Mainstream Western media. The reasons of this change were not clear and not well reported (Doucet, 2018).

The study of Viktor Johansson (2017) analyzes the coverage of the Swedish newspapers of the frame of the Syrian combatants from 2016 to 2017. The term “combatants” here refers to the individuals who travel to Syria in order to join the armed conflict. The results show that the image of these combatants was negative in the newspapers and their actions were considered as problems and dangerous social phenomena.

The coverage of the newspapers of the Syrian combatants in Flanders and the Netherlands between 2012 and 2013 highlighted the ‘terrorist’ frame and stressed that the stimulus which guides the movements of the fighters was religious (Islamic) more than secular. The journalists selected their vocabulary such as “the victim and the terrorist” as a result of their abidance to the societal construction of the issue. The term “victim” was often used with the purpose of signifying the danger of extremists on the moderate Muslims (Berbers, 2015). Powell (2018) sees that this sort of coverage links Islam to terrorism. Viktor Johansson (2017) believes that linking between Islam and terrorism requires investigating the religious trends of the journalists and the newspapers.

However, at the same time, the fighters themselves Islamize their movements. The Flemish extremist organizations used the term “Martyr” in order to legalize their activities and present them as solutions to problems arising from the dominance of the western and secular culture on the Islamic nation (Berbers, 2015) .

Maura Conway (2008) sees that the fact that information is power has become known by everybody, governments and peoples, but also by terrorists and their audience. The true victory, especially these days, is strongly related to the supremacy of the propaganda stories. One cannot undermine the ability of the propaganda of ISIS as it developed its communication mechanism in form and content through employing the most modern technology in order to influence the recipient (Gates & Podder, 2015).

Terrorism employs social media to serve the jihadists’ operational strategy in Syria and Iraq. ISIS is there on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the other interactive media. Its propaganda tools enabled it of polarizing a lot of people to take part in the war (Veilleux-Lepage, 2014; Klausen, 2015). Social media is being used to prepare and perform crimes and operations of aggression against the civilians. Therefore, governments, especially the forces of intelligence and security, should be prepared to face this danger. The problem is that social media is renewable and its characteristics are continuously changing. Therefore, those who follow them up should work non-

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stop in order to keep up with these changes and understand them to eventually face the danger of terrorism (Thompson, 2012).

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## Chapter 2

### Research Problem

The research aims at studying the news coverage of the two channels, Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar of the Syrian crisis from 2011-2013. This crisis has two aspects; internal and external. The external aspect is excluded; for example: the Arab conferences, international conferences, the opposition activities abroad, meetings and workshops. This study focuses on the internal aspect of the Syrian crisis: anti and pro-government movements, the security and military situation, and finally the results and repercussions of the war between the conflicting parties; that is, how did the channels cover what is happening on the Syrian soil, not outside? There is one exception which is the coverage of the refugees outside Syria. The research seeks to know how the situation of the Syrian refugees and displaced people inside and outside Syria was covered.

The aim of the research focus on the internal aspect of the crisis is the desire to analyze deeply some details which reveal the mechanism of the media while covering an event characterized by sophistication and complexity, an event where variables overlap so that the news coverage becomes a complicated and sensitive issue. Applying the minimum requirements of objectivity or career ethics might be very difficult, if not impossible. The other aim of only focusing on the internal aspect of the Syrian crisis is the desire to study the Syrian event within its local and national boundaries. That is studying the Syrian-Syrian conflict, the conflict between the people of the same country. How did the contradiction of the Syrian visions manifest? How has the fight among “the one Syrian family” been portrayed?

### Research Questions

- What are the resources the channels relied on? Were these channels able to send their reporters to cover the events on the ground? Was the presence of the reporter in the news reports full or partial<sup>3</sup>? What was the orientation of the sources towards the Syrian government and its actions? Is it pro, neutral, or anti? What are the main contexts in which the sources of conflicting parties are called?
- What are the news frames on which the two channels have focused? How can the word and picture, selected in a way that suits the editorial policies of the channels, create different and conflicting mental images; how were the events given two radically different faces?
- How were the pro and anti-government public movements portrayed? What are the requirements and aspirations of the Syrian people? What is the significance of being selective of the Syrian mottos by the channels and repeating them in the news reports?

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<sup>3</sup> The concept of “full” and “partial” presence is explained in the research methodology section.

- How was the security and military situation covered? Where was the main focus: on the military activities of the government or on the military activities of the opposition? What are the military activities of the government? What are the military activities of the armed opposition?
- What are the outcomes of the conflict? On what war consequences have the two channels, Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar, focused?
- Did the two channels report the propaganda of the government and the opposition? Why and within what context? What are the bases of such propaganda?
- How has the personality of the Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad been portrayed by the two channels? Within what contexts?
- Who are the effective personalities inside Syria? Have the two channels iconified particular personalities and presented them as effective public symbols on the ground? Who are these characters?
- What are the ethnicities and religious sects that have been highlighted in the media? In what contexts?
- What are the solutions to the crisis and what is the future of Syria according to the orientation and coverage of the two channels?
- Have the two channels relied in the news coverage on live videos, info-graphics, photos? What is the visual content of the reports; what are the visual frames adopted by the two channels?
- What are the characteristics of the news rhetoric of the two channels? Have the channels adopted the direct (declarative) or indirect method? Has the news discourse contained implicit messages? Has the exaggeration or simplification method been adopted?
- What are the significations of the icons and nonverbal signs?
- How could the channels create contradictory mental impressions amongst recipients through directing the film material and through selecting vocabulary and terminology?
- What is the general orientation of the two channels regarding the conflicting parties? What are the mechanisms for showing or demonstrating such orientation?

### **Research Purposes**

- Revealing the mechanism of the news coverage by Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar of the Syrian crisis from 2011 till 2013.
- Identifying the characteristics of the media rhetoric by the channels being studied under the influence of many political, religious and ideological variables; also under the influence of methods and goals of financing these media outlets. What happens to news when the channels turn into ideological conflict fronts? What are the tools of media attack and defense in the state of war?
- Revealing the tools of the media war, misleading and propaganda, the tools that are provided to create news rhetoric and to create mental images that suit the editorial policies of the channels; policies that are imposed by the parties that finance, manage, and direct these channels.

### **Research Time Limit**

The time limit of the research is specified from mid-March 2011- the beginning of the Syrian crisis- till December 2013. The reason why the research covers only three years is that events in Syria reached a different stage at the end of 2013. This was the time when the role of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) started growing gradually and affecting strongly the course and outcomes of the crisis (AbuRomman et al, 2016). Thus, a new stage started regarding tackling the Syrian events; at the Arab and international levels. The Syrian issue was no longer a local issue; rather, it came to be internationally and media-wise a regional conflict whose parties are some Arab countries like Saudi-Arabia and Qatar, and some other countries like Turkey, Iran and Israel. This conflict also turned into a direct and obvious war of interests between Russia and the USA. The Syrian soil became a platform receiving militant fighters who came from different countries; each one of them carries his own sender's message. Many media, analysts and specialists have adopted the term "civil war" to describe what is going on in Syria during the first three years of the crisis. However, the unconcealed intervention of the regional and international forces changed the characteristics of the Syrian event and the characteristics of the media discourse on this event (Tokmajyan, 2014).

### **The Importance of the Study**

The Syrian crisis is locally, regionally and internationally interlacing and complex. The geopolitical importance of Syria and the positions of the Syrian government towards a lot of issues, the most prominent of which are the Arab-Israeli conflict and supporting the “Resistance” in Palestine and Lebanon, divided the Syrian society and the Arab media into extreme supporters and opponents of Assad and created contrasting mental images of the Syrian crisis (Deeb, 2015; duMont, 2012; Vignal, 2012). The value of this research is connected to the geopolitical importance of Syria, especially in the frame of the Arab-Israeli war. The Syrian regime introduces itself as the resistant and anti-Zionist occupation regime and that is why it is exposed to a universal conspiracy in the context of what is called “the Arab Spring” (Deeb, 2015; Merz, 2014). I argue that the Arab-Arab, Arab-Israeli, Arab-Iranian and Arab-international relations are different, contradicting and conflicting. These relations feed the Arab societies with discord based on sectarian, political, economic, social and doctrinal grounds. They also influence the mechanism of media and the content of its messages. The media coverage of the Syrian crisis is performed in the context of these differences and disagreements. The study of the news coverage of the war in Syria requires profound understanding of these facts in order that the explicit and implicit news discourses can be grasped. The complexity of the Syrian crisis data and the division of the views of analyzers and researchers on the role of the Syrian government and Assad in the Arab issues created difficulty concerning describing and classifying events. Everybody sees things from the corner of their convictions and the media was influenced by this division which caused a crisis of terminology in the news discourse.

The importance of this research is also connected to that of Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar, especially in terms of their ability to influence the public opinion. As from its beginning; 1996, the Qatari channel, Al-Jazeera, drew the attention of the Arab and international public opinion concerning the way of its coverage of wars and sensitive issues; locally and internationally (Harahsha, 2013; Miladi, 2005). Qatar is considered an important regional and international player whose role cannot be undermined. Al-Jazeera began financed and supervised by the Qatari royal family (Abdul-Nabi, 2015). The Syrians were influenced by the messages of the channel as from its start. That time the Syrian media was owned and controlled by the government sector or by the supporters of Al-Baath ruling party. Many issues which were considered taboo topics could not be tackled, especially those related to Al-Assad family in addition to sectarian ones and political thoughts different from those of Al-Baath party. However, as from the beginning, Al-Jazeera discussed all these topics and criticized the ruling regimes, which made it seem as the channel that expresses the concerns and interests of the Arab citizen. In this way, Al-Jazeera strongly dominated the Arab media arena (Kinali, 2013; Abdelmoula, 2012; el Oifi 2004). There is another viewpoint which supposes that Al-Jazeera is only a developed form of the Arab official media that aims at promoting the regimes' policies and legalizing all their decisions and actions (Harahsha, 2013).

Al-Jazeera's coverage of events in the countries of the "Arab Spring" drew the attention and interest of both ordinary people and researchers (Abdul-Nabi, 2015). According to Shalash, Al-Jazeera took the lead in covering the opposing movements of the Arab regimes so much that some believed that the channel was the cause of launching the "Arab Spring". Al-Jazeera cancelled its traditional programs and only covered the revolutions, one after the other. It employed all the programs, interviews and reportages to talk about the latest events in the Arab world. Its success in covering the revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt inspired the other Arab peoples (Shalash, 2013). Abdullah M. (2012) assumes that Al-Jazeera played an important part in supporting the Egyptian revolution and caused its success through intensified and deep coverage. This led to bring about an important political change in the Arab arena (Abdullah, 2012). Nevertheless, some Al-Jazeera officials see that the channel was late in reporting the revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt and that it did not participate in fueling the situation. On the contrary, it was very slow as these topics are considered very sensitive. This slowness made the staff of the channel receive calls from the Arab audience accusing them of complicity against peoples (Shalash, 2013).

A lot of viewers think that Al-Jazeera's credibility led to the success of the Egyptian revolution. Contrary to that, another viewpoint believes that Al-Jazeera went out of professional limits and was an influential actor which triggered events. The channel did not restrict itself to coverage; it rather participated in creating the movements. The third viewpoint, however, sees that there is great exaggeration when talking about the role of Al-Jazeera in the success of the revolution as its true role does not exceed normal reporting (Abdullah, 2012).

Al-Jazeera was exposed to severe criticism due to divergence in its coverage of the opponent movements of the Arab governments. For instance, Al-Jazeera supported the revolutions of



Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria while it did not pay the same attention to the uprisings in Yemen, KSA and Bahrain (the allies of Qatar and the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council). It supported the uprising in Libya and introduced it as a legal rebellion while it adopted a very weak position towards the Bahrain Uprising (Abdul-Nabi, 2015).

Al-Jazeera was also criticized because, in the context of its coverage of the Syrian uprising, it depended on unreliable and uncertified video footages and information which led to a negative change in the views of many people about the Qatari diplomacy. The coverage of the channel of the chemical attack on Ghouta in August 2013 was a propaganda in the interest of the foreign policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Abdul-Nabi, 2015). Nevertheless, at the same time – as we saw in the Previous Studies –the coverage of Al-Jazeera was considered as an objective one with a diversity of sources (Akkerhuis, 2013).

The criticism directed to Al-Jazeera did not lessen its importance as a source of information and a prime mover of events. Many analyzers, politicians, opinion leaders and presidents such as Obama followed Al-Jazeera channel to know the events in the Arab countries as from the end of 2010. The success of Al-Jazeera in drawing the attention of opinion leaders and presidents made it an influential tool in the regional and international policy (Abdul-Nabi, 2015). The most prominent reasons which made me choose Al-Jazeera are: the difference of the attitudes of Al-Jazeera between a revolution and another; the divergence of the results of scientific research about the coverage of the channel of the “Arab Spring”, especially concerning the Syrian issue; considering Al-Jazeera an objective channel only because it covered the views of the conflicting parties with neglecting the contexts in which these views were presented; the resignation of some Al-Jazeera media personnel due to the coverage of the events of the Arab Spring , especially in Syria (Shalash, 2013); closing the offices of Al-Jazeera by many Arab regimes during the “Arab Spring” (Abdullah, 2012); and finally because of the deep – negative or positive – effect on the audience, opinion leaders and political leaders by this channel.

Al-Manar channel represents Shiites in Lebanon and it is considered the main carrier of the ideology of Hezbollah (Matar, 2006). Through this channel Hezbollah introduces itself as a resistant against the Israeli aggression and a defender of Lebanon, especially in the south. Al-Manar’s popularity increased after its continual coverage of the Palestinian Intifada and the war of Hezbollah with Israel which forced the latter to withdraw from the Lebanese south (Conway, 2008). Hezbollah’s media tools are able to contribute to forming the so-called “New Middle East” even in a way different from that which the USA administration envisages (Conway, 2008).

Al Manar’s discourse is different from other Arab channels. It is known for its seriousness and commitment to issues of special interest for society. The channel’s programs continually change in order to keep up with the aspirations of Muslims and non-Muslims. Its committed treatment of a lot of non-religious topics, which are of interest for different age groups and social ones,

introduced it to the Arab society as a respected channel which is suitable for the family (Baylouny, 2009).

Al-Manar always links the speeches of Hezbollah directed outward to the party's policies and its aspirations concerning the Lebanese society. It also paves the way of Hezbollah to establish its projects away from military issues. Al-Manar gives way to discussions among all the Lebanese, not only those who belong to the Ideology of Hezbollah. Moreover, it pays noticeable attention to the youth group and considers it the nucleus of the future. Therefore, the channel sees that its duty is to resist the western media and policies which influence these young people, especially the females (Baylouny, 2009).

Hezbollah is considered an influential force politically and militarily not only in Lebanon, but also in the Middle East. Its popularity grew gradually and reached the zenith after its victory on Israel in Lebanon in 2006. However, its military interference in the Syrian events made it lose a considerable part of this popularity (Harb, 2016; Eric Lob, 2014; Tokmajyan, 2014). The public opinion viewed the interference in Syria as a step emerging from several motivations. Some see that the reason is religious in interest of protecting those who belong to the Shiite sect and spreading this sect. Others consider the reason political and ideological as Hezbollah seeks to politicize some aspects and religious disagreements in order to attract the supporters and push them to adopt actions that please the party and achieve its political and geostrategic targets and interests (Shalabi, 2015; Tokmajyan, 2014).

Some welcomed the military intervention of Hezbollah in Syria, while others severely condemned it and considered that Hezbollah neglected the true enemy, Israel, and contributed to murdering the Sunni sect on a sectarian basis so that it could support the regime in which those who belong to the Alawite sect occupy high leading posts. Yet, the General Secretary of Hezbollah negated these charges considering its interference a duty to protect Syria, the skeleton of the axis of resistance which is formed of Syria, Iran and Hezbollah. Moreover, he considered the intervention a necessity to protect Lebanon through a preventive war against the Islamic extremist (Harb, 2016; Tokmajyan, 2014).

Those who criticize Hezbollah believe that it supports a tyrannical oppressing regime whose principles contradict those of the members of Hezbollah who have introduced themselves as supporters of the oppressed for a long time (Harb, 2016; Shalabi, 2015). Many Arab societies do not believe the propaganda of the Syrian government and Hezbollah concerning their resistance against Israel and refuse using Hezbollah of such a ground to justify its military interference in Syria. The Palestinian factions which were previously supported by the Syrian government did not support the regime against the people, which assures the illegality of Hezbollah's position (Shalabi, 2015). Some analysts see that the interference of Hezbollah in Syria led to its erosion from inside

as many Lebanese Shiites oppose this intervention and consider it the cause of their children's death (Lob, 2014).

The reaction of Hezbollah towards the "Arab spring" varied in accordance with its ideological attitudes towards the governments. It supported the people's movements which opposed the ruling dictatorships that are supported by the United States and that avoid confronting Israel. It intensified the right of the demonstrators in the democratic change. It also recalled religious concepts such as jihad and martyrdom in the context of its describing the "Arab spring". However, the uprising in Syria confounded Hezbollah which could not persist with its supporting position of the Arab peoples against the regimes; it had to support the Syrian government, its ally and supporter of its project of resisting Israel (Shalabi, 2015).

Despite the importance of Hezbollah's relationship with the Syrian government and the importance of Al-Manar as a superior channel in Psychological war (Calabrese, 2013; Daher, 2011), there is a shortage of research which tackles Al-Manar's coverage of the Syrian crisis. Hezbollah's relationship with the Syrian state; the contradiction of its position towards the uprisings of the "Arab Spring"; the split of the Lebanese and Arab public opinion about the concept of resistance and the contradiction of the principles which Hezbollah advocates; Hezbollah's military intervention in Syria; and the subordination of Al-Manar's editorial policy to all these variables makes the research on the mechanism of this channel of covering the Syrian crisis an important task.

This study could contribute to enriching the researches which deal with propaganda, media misleading and media war which is subordinated to military and political war through studying the relation between the verbal and non-verbal significances; studying the signs in their multiple contexts; and analyzing the relation between traditional and modern media through studying the quantity and contexts of adopting sources. Several studies searched the significances of source repetition (Van Leuven et al, 2015), but I think that number significances are not enough to understand the mechanism of media at the time of war; contexts must be studied. Researches concentrated on "prominent events" in the Syrian crisis, but this study deals with the coverage of the daily events throughout three years. I suppose that this accurately uncovers the policy of the channels towards the Syrian crisis as the prominent events may require special coverage methods which suit the positions of the local and international actors.

## **Research Hypotheses**

### **Regarding the news sources:**

Because of imposed censorship by the Syrian government on Al-Jazeera Channel, the opposition sources became the first news source which the channel adopted, and the base upon which the news story was built. Regarding the orientation of the sources, I assume that the majority

of the sources of Al-Jazeera opposed the stances and activities of the Syrian government. Al-Jazeera has tried to prove its objectivity by calling pro-regime sources, but the contexts in which they were put serve the propaganda of the armed and unarmed opposition.

The Syrian government did not impose censorship on Al-Manar Channel. Still, the channel reporter was not the first Source of the information. Al-Manar adopted the media rhetoric of the pro-government Syrian channels. Al-Manar took these channels as a very important news source. The channel exercised self-censorship because its news frames were formed according to what supports the propaganda of the Syrian government. Al-Manar relied on opposition sources to prove the Syrian government's propaganda. That is to say fighting the opponents through using their weapon.

### **Regarding the news topic:**

#### **1. The public movement:**

The opposition public movement according to Al-Jazeera is a revolution of freedom, dignity, and liberation from the tyranny of the dictatorship and corruption. Al-Jazeera did not cover the pro-government public movement; rather it touched upon it incidentally and very quickly. The contexts in which pro-Assad processions were mentioned were offensive against the Syrian government. I argue that contexts are means of warfare with defensive and offensive characteristics.

However, for Al-Manar there is no genuine opposition public movement. Rather, it is a military movement by outlawed people supported and financed by Arab and international parties who have interest in the downfall of the Syrian government. Some terms may indicate a movement against Assad but they have been placed in “defensive” contexts in support of government propaganda. Al-Manar was committed to covering public movement supporting the Syrian government and president.

#### **2. The militant activities of the conflicting parties:**

Al-Jazeera focused on the military activities by the government and portrayed the government army forces and the Syrian security forces as a wild beast swallowing everything that comes in its way, or as a fire burning everything hysterically. Al-Jazeera covered the militant activities of the opposition, but in the less percentage compared to that of the military activities of the government. The picture of the armed opposition varies on Al-Jazeera Channel. Sometimes it is portrayed as a strong arm facing a very criminal regular army and defeating it, and sometimes the military armed opposition looks like an army only able to defend, a kind of powerless army that needs military support. Al-Manar coverage of the military activities by the government and by armed opposition varied according to necessities and requirements of the stage. The channel sometimes portrayed the government as a victim and sometimes as a hunter of the terrorists.

### **3. Outcomes and repercussions of the conflict:**

Priorities of the two channels were different in terms of showing the outcomes and repercussions of the war. Al-Jazeera focused on mentioning the civilian deaths and presented them as victims of the criminality of the government. Al-Manar focused on mentioning civilian deaths, the regular army soldiers, and the people who died because of the armed opposition in a way that serves the propaganda of the Syrian government.

There is a radical difference in the way the two channels tackled the subject of refuge, displacement, economy and services situations. The news coverage was not in favour of all the components of the Syrian people; rather, there was media alignment.

#### **Regarding Al-Assad personality and other official and none official personalities:**

The two channels did not continuously tackle the personality and activities of the Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad. Al-Jazeera made use of this news item for the purpose of criticizing and instigating against the political and military course by Assad, whereas, Al-Manar promoted the positivity and good behavior of the president. The channels iconified some personalities who became in the media symbols for freedom fighting, steadfastness and challenge.

#### **Regarding ethnicities and religious sects:**

The frank tackling of the stances and situations of the Syrian ethnicities was incidental and superficial. The contexts within which the situations of the ethnicities and circumstances of the people belonging to religious sects - considered as minorities in Syria - carry significance which was employed by Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar to confirm the mental image drawn by these channels about the reality of the Syrian crisis. Sectarian-wise, the channels used vocabulary and pictures that could indirectly instigate sectarian schism and violence.

#### **Regarding the solutions to the crisis:**

In its reports Al-Jazeera did not present a clear solution to the crisis; rather it used to broadcast provocative expressions encouraging Syrians to continue with their public movement, whether peacefully and militarily till the downfall of the government. Al-Manar did not clearly and precisely tackle the possible solutions to the Syrian crisis. For Al-Manar the Syrian army should win over the conspiracy, which indicates implicitly that the solution to the crisis is by regaining control over all regions by the Syrian government.

#### **Regarding the techniques of discourse and images:**

The two channels relied on videos more than on info-graphic and photographs.

Regarding the psychological war applied through media being studied, the direction of the news material was an important weapon in influencing the emotions of the recipient, hence on the public opinion. Al-Jazeera followed the exaggeration method while Al-Manar followed the method of simplification or euphemism many times. Adopting the method of exaggeration by Al-Manar was in particular contexts that serve the propaganda of the government.

The two methods of exaggeration and simplification were followed through selectivity of the news topics, selectivity of vocabulary, selectivity of pictures, showing or hiding voices contained in the videos, the tone of the voice of the journalists, and through the body language of the Syrians who expressed their stances.

Al-Jazeera discourse varied between being direct and indirect. This discourse included explicit signifiers and other sentences that have implicit and allusive significations. Such implication tells the desire of Al-Jazeera for being reserved sometimes in order to present itself as an objective channel. It also tells the desire of this media to influence the recipient in different ways like the literary style; styles that are able to plant and feed thoughts and feelings amongst the target audience.

Al-Manar adopted the direct and frank rhetoric. However, this rhetoric always included propaganda purposes serving the stances of the Syrian government. That is to say, we can consider that the goals of the messages are the implicit significances the channel sought to be received by the recipient.

Sometimes Al-Manar used the method of implication or intimation. That was in particular context where such method serves the influencing power of the news message over the viewer.

### **Regarding the orientation of the channels concerning the conflicting parties:**

The bias of both Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar is definite. Al-Jazeera supports the opposition; it is the TV platform that adopted and highlighted strongly the rhetoric and propaganda of the opposition. Al-Manar supports the government; its news coverage is an extension to the coverage of the Syrian TV channels that are pro-government and which broadcast its propaganda.

## **Research Population**

The research population is all the individuals, objects or elements that share the same characteristics which can be observed (Bin Morsli, 2003; Misbah, 2007). It is the sum of similar messages whose characteristics the researcher wants to know (Tamar, 2007). The population is the total sources where the content to be studied was published or broadcast (Abdul Hamid, 2009).

There are two types of the research population: the target population and the accessible population (Abdul Hamid, 2009).

The target population is all the units the researcher wants to study. Hence, it is sometimes characterized by the large number and widespread to the extent that it is very difficult and maybe impossible to study it completely. On the other hand, the accessible population is the population that can be accessed out of the target population. The researcher chooses it through the process of sampling. This population is considered representative, in terms of characteristics, of the target population. It is the population out of which the sample is drawn (Tamar, 2007).

**The target population for this study** is all the news and news reports by Al-Manar and Al-Jazeera which tackled the internal aspect of the Syrian crisis (events on the Syrian ground not outside) from the year 2011 till 2013. Exceptionally, the topic of refugees outside Syria was added to the internal aspect of the crisis.

News is a media material whose job is to transfer information – objectively - about incidents and new events that are current and important for the recipient. News is information about a topic which we didn't know about before. A piece of news answers the following questions who? What? When? Where? How? Why? (Al-Dalou, 1995; Al-Yaseri, 1987; Khaddour, 1982).

A news report is a media material in between the short fast news and the journalistic investigation whose job is to show realities, their backgrounds and their details (Al-Dalou, 1995; Al-Hamamsi, 1993). A news report includes all the elements that are included by the news but in a deeper and more elaborated way. A report is an expanded piece of news (Al-Jandoubi, 2010; Adham, 1984).

News and news report are the first stage of information. The reason why the study focuses on news and report is because they are the keystone upon which the second stage of information is based, which is the stage of explaining and analysing by the specialists (Al-Jandoubi, 2010; Jawad, 2002; Adham, 1984; Khaddour, 1982).

### **The accessible population for this study**

The electronic website for Al-Jazeera includes news texts and video news reports about the Syrian crisis. Searching for texts is done by using keywords. Therefore, it is difficult to confine the number of all texts (the number of pieces of news) which tackled the Syrian case being studied. Regarding the video reports, the channel dedicated a special archive for such reports. This part of the archive does not include texts. It only includes video news reports<sup>4</sup>.

The search service in Al-Jazeera archive related to news reports enables the researcher find the required reports quickly and accurately. This is because the archive is classified according to the names of countries, dates and news reports headlines. It's enough to choose the name of a country, for example Syria, and specify the dates of the required reports, from March 2011 till December 2013, so the total number of reports will be shown on the screen. Accordingly, 3891 is the total number of the reports which tackled the Syrian event from March 2011 till December 2013. On average this is 1297 reports for each year, which means four reports on average for each day.

Regarding Al-Manar Channel, when the researcher defined the research population –in 2014 – the channel consecrated a link on its main page of the website specifically dedicated for the Syrian issue. It included texts and video reports starting from the year 2010<sup>5</sup>. It wasn't easy to confine the

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4 Al-Jazeera Channel, Reports' library, <http://www.aljazeera.net/multimedia/reportslibrary> available on 30 May 2017.

5 In the year 2016 the formatting of the electronic website of Al-Manar Channel was changed. The special section about the Syrian crisis was deleted on the main page of the website, but the archive includes special section about news related to Syria.

Al-Manar Channel, the Archive, <http://archive.almanar.com.lb/category.php?id=35> available on 30 May 2017.

number of news items which tackled the Syrian crisis from the year 2011 till the year 2013. The search services and the channel archive do not allow performing this operation easily.

In the year 2011 the electronic website of the channel included news texts more than video news reports. In the year 2012 the website included video reports, but not continuously. Sometimes there were only texts. In the year 2013 the video news reports were available nearly always.

## **Research Sample**

The research goals and questions lead the researcher during the process of selecting the content to be analyzed (ELO S. & KYNGA, 2008; Mohsen, 1973). A sample must be chosen when the number of the research population is very big and there's no possibility to analyze it all (GAO, 1996; Toaima, 1989). The sample is a partial group of this population (a limited number of items) that can be made use of to help the researcher do without studying all the items of the population (Abdul Hamid, 2004; M. Hussein, 1983; Mubarak, 1992).

There are some conditions that must be met in the sample (Humam, 1983). This sample must be representative of the population out of which it is drawn (Duncan, 1989). It must represent a reflection of the basic traits and characteristics of the research population (M. Hussein, 1983). The issue of representativity is considered a controversy. Sheldon Gawiser (1997) asks the question explaining the concept of the sample: how can you meet 1,000 people only and probe their opinions and then claim that you know what 250 million Americans think of? Therefore, the process of selecting the sample must be accurate in a way it takes into consideration the capability of the selected sample to represent the characteristics of the whole research population (Mubarak, 1992).

Having equal opportunities is considered another condition for selecting the sample. Every individual in the research population must have the opportunity to be selected within the sample (M. Al-Hassan, 2009; Atwi, 2007). The researcher should avoid being biased too (Al-Assaf, 1989) because the goal of any scientific research is to explain a particular phenomenon with objectivity as much as possible (Neuendorf, 2002). Selecting accurately representative sample to the research population is considered a proof of the objectivity of the researcher (Alabd & Azmi, 2009). Such representation leads to meeting one of the most important conditions for content analysis, which is generalizability, which is the ability to apply the results of the sample analysis to all items of the research population (M. Hussein, 1983; Atwi, 2007).

### **- Types of samples**

There are two types: probabilistic samples and non-probabilistic samples (Tamar, 2007). In this study the two types were adopted in order to achieve the goals of the research.

Because the research problematic has been confined to studying the news coverage of the internal (local) aspect of the Syrian crisis, and because the external aspect has been excluded, which includes the activities of the opposition outside Syria, Arab and international conferences,



stances of countries regarding the crisis in Syria, the purposive sample had to be adopted. It is a kind of non-probabilistic sample that does not rely on coincidence and where the analysis units are not chosen randomly, rather according to characteristics and standards set by the researcher so that the sample can serve the goals and problem of the research (Tamar, 2007; Alabd & Azmi, 2009; Abdul Hamid, 2004; Ayyad, 2007). A purposive sample was drawn which included a collection of texts and video news reports which tackled the following subjects: public movements which are pro and anti-government, military and security situation and the results of the conflict from 2011 - 2013.

One fault of the purposive sample is the likelihood that the researcher could be biased when selecting (Atwi, 2007, Tamar, 2007). Moreover, such sample requires initial exploring or reading of the files that will be studied so that the materials that suit the problem are selected. The desire of the researcher to obtain genuine knowledge is the most important factor that enables him avoid being biased. I seek such knowledge and I seek achieving the goals of the research very honestly. Therefore, the sample was drawn on the basis that the media material includes the subjects to be studied regardless of the orientation of these subjects (Pro, anti or neutral).

Then a simple random sample was drawn out of this purposive sample. Random sample is one kind of probabilistic sample. The units are selected by coincidence and randomly. This provides the opportunity to all files, as it also helps the researcher avoid being biased. The simple random sample is used when the research population is homogeneous (Atwi, 2007; Zugheib, 2009; Tamar, 2007).

#### **- Sample size**

The sample size plays an important role and it affects the credibility and the accuracy of the results of the analysis (Mubarak, 1992). As a general rule, the big size of the sample is suitable for the quantitative analysis because the larger the number of the studied units the higher the representativity is. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis can make use of a small sample where the discourse analysis requires elaboration and being deep (Mubarak, 1992; Abdul Hamid, 2004).

There is no fixed and absolute size of the sample. It varies according to the goals and techniques of the research (M. Hussein, 1983). But some researchers think that it's better to achieve balance between the number of research population units and the number of the sample units drawn out of it. If the number of the research population units is 3000 it would be better to have a sample per cent of 10% out of the per cent of this population (Tamar, 2007).

Upon deciding the sample size, I took into consideration the following variables:

- The representative ability of the sample, thus enabling the researcher generalize results to the whole research population.

- Achieving balance between the number of the research population units and the number of the sample units.

- And finally suiting the sample size of the analysis techniques that are adopted and this was the most important variable that controlled the sample size.

The total number of Al-Jazeera reports which tackled the Syrian crisis from 2011 till 2013 was 3891. It wasn't possible to classify all files according to the subjects being tackled; have they tackled the internal or external aspect of the crisis? That is why I assumed that half of the number of the reports tackled the internal aspect of the Syrian event and the other half tackled the external aspect. Accordingly, the sample size was decided so that it does not go beyond 150 reports.

In relation to Al-Manar, it wasn't possible to calculate the number of files that dealt with the Syrian crisis from 2011 two 2013 accurately. Therefore, I assumed that the total number is 3000 and I divided this number into two halves assuming that the first half tackled the internal aspect of the Syrian crisis and the second half tackled the external aspect. Accordingly, the sample size was decided so that it does not go beyond 150 reports.

It was taken into consideration that the higher the percentage of homogeneity among the population units the less we need to increase the sample size (Abdul Hamid, 2009; Tamar, 2007).

Because the two channels have different methods for formatting and archiving media materials, the samples were drawn in slightly different ways.

#### **- Al-Jazeera channel sample**

The Al-Jazeera archive enabled choosing a purposive sample for each month separately starting from March 2011 until December 2013. The number of the purposive sample units for the three years is 674 units<sup>6</sup>. A random sample was drawn out of this purposive sample of 136 video news reports. Four reports were selected from each month, so the number of the 2011 files was 40 reports. The number of the 2012 files was 48 reports. The number of the 2013 files was 48 reports. The total number is 136 news reports.

#### **- Al-Manar channel sample**

Because a report is an expanded piece of news, I wanted to focus on studying the video news report. But this was not always possible for Al-Manar Channel. Its archive did not always include video reports about events in Syria between 2011 and 2012. This shortage carries significance that will be studied later on. So, it was necessary to use news texts instead of video reports. The news texts had to be available on the electronic website of Al-Manar Channel. These texts also reflect the characteristics of the news rhetoric by Al-Manar TV. So, Al-Manar sample includes (written) news texts and video news reports<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Details are in the index.

<sup>7</sup> The researcher relied on the classification by the Channel. Al-Manar presents these media materials as news reports broadcast within news bulletins.

The formatting of Al-Manar archive did not enable following the same method that was followed for drawing Al-Jazeera sample. That is, it was not possible to draw a purposive sample for each month separately starting from March 2011 until December 2013. Thus, it was not possible to draw four files for each month separately. So, a total purposive sample for the three years was drawn from 2011 until 2013. The number of units for this sample is 363. Then a random sample was drawn.

The sample size for each year was different: Al-Manar sample for the year 2011 includes 26 files, 10 video news reports and 16 written news texts. Al-Manar sample for the year 2012 include 43 files, 31 video news reports and 12 written news texts. Al-Manar sample for the year 2013 includes 71 video news reports. The total number of the studied files is 140 files.

The difference in the sample size related to each year is due to the method of drawing the purposive sample on the one hand but more important than that to the density of the media coverage. Al-Manar Channel intensified its news coverage of the events in Syria gradually; the Year 2013 witnessed an intensive coverage of the events<sup>8</sup>.

#### **- Summary of sample drawing**

A purposive sample including files that tackled the details of the crisis and the events taking place inside Syria, not outside, was drawn. Then out of this purposive sample, a random sample was drawn. The sample of each channel was divided into 3 sections: the sample of year 2011, the sample of year 2012, and the sample of year 2013. The portion between the number of the available research population units and the number of drawn sample units was taken into consideration. The number of Al-Jazeera units is 136 video news reports. The number of Al-Manar sample units is 140 news texts and video reports.

#### **- Additional procedures related to sampling**

The videos and texts of the random sample were saved on an external hard drive because they are the content to be studied. As for the purposive sample, it was enough to mention headlines, dates, and the internet links related to the units of this sample<sup>9</sup>.

## **Research Techniques**

There are two techniques for analyzing given information: the quantitative statistical analysis and the qualitative analysis. At the start of the research the researcher should decide whether the manifest content is going to be studied or the latent content as well (ELO & KYNGA, 2008).

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<sup>8</sup> The researcher observation.

<sup>9</sup> Details are in the index.

According to many researchers including (Hansen et al, 1998; Shoemaker and Reese 1996): combining quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis is very necessary to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the meaning. This combination also enables knowing the possible effects of the communication message over the recipient. Content analysis is considered ideal when the communication content is the basis for inference (Paula M, 1999). Harold Lasswell (1927) entered the content analysis as a systematic method for studying mass media, especially when related to studying propaganda.

The adopted method in this study is a common method in the field of media content analysis. The methods of content analysis, the quantitative and qualitative, were combined. Many researchers agreed on the importance of this type of methods (Charaudeau et al, 2001; Cheveigné, 2000; Cheveigné, Boy, Galloux, 2002). Because it allows analyzing explicit and implicit messages of the content through classifying and evaluating main concepts, symbols and subjects (Reitz, 2004). This type of analysis represents deductive processes (related to quantitative analysis) and inductive processes (related to qualitative analysis) of the content (Charaudeau et al, 2001; Cheveigné, 2000; Cheveigné, Boy, Galloux, 2002). Differences between these two types have diminished and the number studies that do not try to match between them in relation to media research have decreased (Charaudeau, Maingueneau, 2002).

### **Quantitative Analysis**

#### **- Its definition and conditions**

It is a research technique (Weber, 1990; Holsti, 1969; Berelson, 1952; Lasswell, Lerner and Pool, 1952) “that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (Weber, 1990). It is used for objective, systematic and quantitative description and identification of specified characteristics of messages. It is used for making replicable and valid inferences from what is said on a given subject in a given place at a given time (Holsti, 1969; Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980; Lasswell, Lerner and Pool, 1952). A researcher can apply it to any communication material (Al-Assaf, 1989).

Written, verbal or visual communication messages can be analyzed by this analysis technique (Cole, 1988). It is not limited to type of variable measured or context of messages (Neuendorf, 2002).

Many researchers including (Stemple, 1982; Jean de bonville, 2000; Berelson, 1952) agreed on the necessity that the quantitative analysis of the content should be exclusive to the manifest content. In other words, it should be exclusive to describing what man said or wrote frankly. The quantitative analysis is only interested in describing what was said, not what wasn't said.

According to Dey (1993), when reading the data the questions are: Who is telling? Where is this happening? When did it happen? What is happening? Why?

There is another approach that is different from this descriptive approach of the content. Some researchers represent the inductive approach where they consider that analysis goes beyond merely describing the content towards reaching indications about the components of the media process and about the implicit and latent meanings in the content (Al-Assaf, 1989; Abdul Hamid, 2009).

So, the quantitative content analysis should be done according to scientific controls that can be summarized as follows (Neuendorf, 2002):

*Objectivity*, which means avoiding the least form of bias. *Validity* This is achieved when the obtained results served the research goals. *Generalizability* where the research results can be generalized to the research population. *Replicability* This requires setting a coding list, so that it works as coding guidelines. Neuman (2014) refers to the necessity to plan coding processes very accurately so that replication can be possible.

#### **- Analysis units**

They are the content to be analysed (Abdul Hamid, 2009; M. Hussein, 1983). Analysis units should be accurately defined in terms of number and size (Al-Assaf, 1989; Alabd & Azmi, 2009).

There are several main units for analysis: the word unit, phrase unit, sentence unit, thought unit, topic unit, and the context unit (Tamar, 2007). Analysis units could be challenging for the researcher. The thought unit could be made up of a sentence or several sentences and it could include several thoughts. Therefore, choosing it as an analysis unit could make the analysis processes sometimes difficult (Catanzaro, 1988; Graneheim&Lundman, 2004). On the other hand, when the analysis unit is very small, like a word, this may lead to a fault in analysis where the word would be decontextualized, which affects the meaning (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

According to the research questions, the analysis unit could be a complete message, extracts from pages, conversation or interview (Robson, 1993; Polit& Beck, 2003). According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004) the best analysis unit should be big enough to represent the research population, and small enough to be kept in mind.

The current study adopted the complete media material as an analysis unit, whether this material is a video news report, or a written news text.

#### **- Analysis categories**

Content analysis encompasses a number of distinct stages: pre-analysis, coding, categorization and inference (Bardin, 2001). This analysis aims at quantitative categorization through grouping vocabulary and thoughts under categories according to well-defined coding guidelines. This process should lead to answering research questions and research hypotheses (Stemler, 2001; Weber, 1990; Burnard 1996).

The process of classification and categorization are related to fragmentation. More precisely, as a technique, the content analysis seeks to explain the contents of communications by breaking down the message and reconstructing it into categories (Blanchet, Gotman, 1992; Abdul Hamid, 2009).

Categorization seeks to organize and group under the same category things and people who share the same nature (Block henriette et al, 1984; Cavanagh, 1997). It also aims at dividing the content into a system of thoughts directly related to the research goals and problems, thus it allows avoiding the other thoughts and contents which do not serve these orientations (Block henriette et al, 1984; M. Hussein, 1983).

### The conditions of the categorical system or grid of analysis.

Categories should meet some conditions, the most important of which: comprehensiveness; categories should allow classifying all the content to be analyzed. Exclusivity; that is lacking the possibility for classify the same content under more than one category at the same time. Objectivity; categories should be codable in a similar way by all coders. Relevance; categories should answer the research questions. Homogeneity; categories should be subject to a unified principle that controls their organization. Finally, productivity; categories should achieve important and rich results and should lead to indications that serve the research hypotheses (Bardin, 2001; M. Hussein, 1983).

Categorization includes specifying a coding list, which is considered a guiding process about the steps of coding. According to Neuman (2014), the accurate planning of the coding processes can make replication possible. All basic and subcategories should be procedurally accurately defined (Maurice Angers, 1997).

### **- Types of categories**

There are no typical categories that work for all kinds of research (Block henriette et al, 1984). But there are two kinds under which all categories can be classified (M. Hussein, 1983; Tamar, 2007). The first category is the form category. It represents all categories which describe the procedure or method of presenting or displaying the content. That is, it is interested in answering the question: How was it said? The second category represents the content categories. They are the categories that describe meaning and thoughts that are included by the content, and they are the categories that are interested in answering: What was said? (Khosh & Sarai, 2011).

In this study, form categories were excluded, including a category that defines the form of the media material; whether it is a report, investigation, news story etc. This is because the research sample studies only the news report which is a video material that is broadcast by a channel within news bulletins. This material includes details related to the piece of news for the purpose of clarifying it. That is to say, it is an expanded piece of news which includes interviews with personalities directly related to the event.

The study also relied on how the channels classified these materials; Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar classify them under the news report category. This is also the case for news texts which have been included in the research sample because video reports were not always available.

The duration for each report is also considered a form category (Tamar, 2007), but it was excluded. The duration of each report in the report sample ranges between 1 to 5 minutes. On Al-Jazeera, these reports were repeated throughout the day. Al-Jazeera broadcast news every hour. Al-Manar also repeated reports in news bulletins throughout the day. Excluding this category was on the basis that they are unable to provide information necessary for the research; on the one hand they are not relevant to the research questions and problems and on the other hand, the time of the reports being studied, from the viewpoint of the researcher, may not be very significant for several reasons: a report is part of a complete news context; news introduction read by the presenter, then the video report is to be broadcast. Experts might then be contacted for the job of explaining the news. Secondly, repeating these reports throughout the day; the report might be three minutes, but it might just be repeated more than 10 times throughout the day. Thus, the time allocated for the same report might be half an hour on a daily basis. It's worth reminding as well that the channels did not allocate one report dealing with the Syrian crisis for each day, rather the number of reports sometimes was more than three or four reports on the same day. Third, if the report duration was short, no more than two minutes, but the report might however be loaded with expressions which affect the recipient and influence him strongly. In this case the importance of time duration diminishes.

The quantitative study was exclusive to some content categories. In fact, the main goal for adopting quantitative analysis of the content in this study is to support the qualitative analysis results; achieving a higher level of objectivity in evaluating the orientation of the channels towards the Syrian crisis. The analysis categories were set so that it is possible to describe the general characteristics of the news coverage by Al-Manar and Al-Jazeera. Most of the details will be studied within the space of qualitative analysis. In other words, the study was not interested in the frequency of all the details to be studied, rather it was interested on studying these details qualitatively.

### **- Pre-study or pre-knowledge**

There are two viewpoints related to the pre-knowledge (pre-reading) of the content to be analysed. The first one considers that DATA could not lead to theories or visions unless the researcher is fully aware of all the details of these DATA (Polit & Beck, 2003). The second one considers that all categories must be selected as well as variables and coding lists without conducting any pre-study, in order to avoid bias (Neuendorf, 2002).

In this study the pre-knowledge took two forms: non purposive and purposive knowledge. The non-purposive knowledge came automatically because of the researcher interest in the Syrian

event. Getting to know the content of news (the research population) was momentary for the researcher. Observing the coverage of Al-Jazeera, Al-Manar, Syrian channels as well as other channels of the Syrian crisis was a priority for the researcher regardless of choosing this topic as a research problem. For example, there was a deep curiosity to know the identity of the sources adopted by the channels. The big difference in selecting the news frames by channels was the most prominent motive for watching and observing many channels with different orientations in order to view the Syrian event from different perspectives and from different angles. Such knowledge of the research population can be described as the general automatic knowledge. Such knowledge is characterised by the general consciousness of the general mechanisms for how channels work.

Automatic knowledge also grew when the researcher experienced the responses of Syrian people to the messages of the TV channels. The researcher experienced division and schism among the different sections of the society; each component has its own channel or channels that speak for them. Anti-government opposition people took Al-Jazeera as a means that represent the viewpoint of the people who are rebelling against the ruling dictatorship. On the other hand, people supporting this government regarded Al-Manar and the Syrian channels as the channels of truth, which broadcast reality with complete honesty and credibility and defy the “misleading” and “deceiving” by the channels that represent the opposition viewpoints.

Curiosity was the most prominent motive for inquiring: How did the channels shape their stances? How could these stances affect the awareness and vision of the Syrian people towards events in Syria? Syrian people watched non-Syrian channels which they trusted and believed, possibly because the nature of how they covered the events in Syria suited the wishes and orientations of such people. All these variables encouraged the researcher to observe the role of the media in enhancing or distorting the awareness of the recipient. Accordingly, a group of research categories were set as an initial list. Some of them represent generic categories like the source category, the source orientation category, the topic category and the content orientation category. And some others represent main and subcategories for these generic categories.

The other form of pre-knowledge came according to a purposive study of the research sample. This procedure was necessary for the final selection of the main and subcategories so that these categories become comprehensive to all points to be analysed quantitatively. For example, the source category: main and subcategories were put initially before conducting the initial study of the research sample, and after doing this study some categories were added or deleted so that they become comprehensive to all form of the sources form. The same happened for the other categories. In short, categories were put before and after the initial purposive study of the research sample.

In fact, the pre-study enabled the researcher achieve a better understanding of the content to be analysed, as it also enabled accurate selection for the research categories. The initial study helped



define the points that should be analysed quantitatively so that they answer part of the research questions which need statistical results. Whereas the qualitative analysis answers the other part of the research questions which require non-numerical results.

The pre-knowledge of the content of analysis did not affect the objectivity of the research. Such knowledge did not create any bias, bearing in mind that bias is: "Inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair"<sup>10</sup> or "A concentration on or interest in one particular area or subject"<sup>11</sup>.

The researcher aims at achieving an accurate knowledge of the mechanism of the news coverage by these channels of the Syrian crisis. The selected categories include the points that should be analysed quantitatively without neglecting or focusing on points more than others.

### **- The categories for this study**

The quantitative analysis categories were divided as follows: Generic categories, main categories, and subcategories. There are six generic categories which are: the source category, the source orientation category, the topic category, the visual content category, the category of displaying the voices included in the videos, and the content orientation category.

Some generic categories include main and subcategories and some others are exclusive to main categories only because they are enough to achieve the desired outcome.

Hence, the content analysis grid was composed of six generic categories, 24 main categories, and 49 subcategories. The total number is 79 categories.

### **1- The source category**

The source is tool or tools through which the channel obtains information (Khokha, 2007). Most often media relies on several sources for shaping the content of messages. Accordingly, the source category searches the different sources that feed the content to be analyzed. Sources vary; they may be people, papers, radio and TV stations, news agencies, books or films, documents etc. (Tamar, 2007).

#### **The main and subcategories for the source category**

##### **1-1 Channel correspondents**

1-1-1 Full presence in the report

1-1-2 Partial presence in the report

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<sup>10</sup> Oxford Living dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bias>, available on 14 August 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Oxford living dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bias>, available on 14 August 2017.

A correspondent is a person who works for news agencies, radio and TV stations, newspapers and magazines, periodicals, etc. whose job is to collect information and send reports about particular topics. He sends such information from the countries where he was sent to cover events<sup>12</sup>.

By full presence by the correspondent in the report is meant that the reporter covers all the facts that are tackled by the report and that the reporter is found on the ground in the regions where the relevant events in the report are happening. For example, some reports deal with events going on in three or four counties and the reporter covers them all.

Partial presence by the correspondent in the report means that the reporter covers part of the events tackled by the report and makes use of other sources for obtain information about the events going on in different regions.

There are several indicators for knowing whether the presence is full or partial: the presence of the reporter in front of the camera, hearing the sound of the reporter while the camera is moving from one place to another, the interaction of people with him even when he is not in front of the camera, like when a Syrian man talks and explains what is going on the ground and speaking directly to a person standing next to the cameraman. This can be clear from the direction where that man is looking. And finally, the context of the news report is considered an indicator for the presence or absence of the reporter.

As for the indicators to the nature of the reporter presence in the studied news texts, the electronic website mentions whether the reporter was the news source or not. In the news context the reporter mentions the other sources he made use of in case he could not be present in the location of the event. The context is a major indicator for knowing the nature of the reporter presence.

## **1-2 Media**

### **1-2-1 Syrian**

### **1-2-2 Arab**

### **1-2-3 International**

By media is meant: “The main means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the Internet) regarded collectively”<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Dictionary.com, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/correspondent> available on 14 August 2017.

Cambridge Dictionary, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/correspondent> available on 14 August 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Oxford Living Dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/media> available on 14 August 2017.

By Syrian media is meant any newspaper, magazine radio or TV located inside Syria and financed by Syrian institutions or people, regardless of whether these Syrian people are the real financier or they are a façade to hide the names of the real financiers; hidden and undeclared financiers.

Also, under this category are the Syrian internet web sites. However, because the managers of these websites do not always mention their locations and their financing sources, a secondary category was allocated in case such type of sources is identified. The purpose of this category is to specify the percentage of how often the channels rely on the Syrian internet websites in comparison to how often they rely on Syrian traditional media sources, radio, TV... (This secondary category won't be classified as a subcategory; rather, its results would be classified under the category: Syrian media).

The Syrian media which represent the views of the Syrian opposition are not classified under this category even when they meet the conditions of the Syrian media. An independent category was allocated for the opposition sources for research purposes.

By Arab media is meant any Arabic speaking media which is located in one of the Arab countries. It's not enough that the media is an Arabic speaking media.

By international media is meant any media located outside the Arab world, whether regionally like Turkey and Iran, or in a wider region like Europe and America.

### **1-3 News agencies**

1-3-1 Syrian

1-3-2 Arab

1-3-3 International

A news agency is defined as: "An organization that supplies news to subscribing newspapers, periodicals, and newscasters<sup>14</sup>".

Syrian news agencies are every agency located inside Syria and managed by a Syrian capital whether governmental and non-governmental.

Arab news agencies are every institution that speaks in Arabic and governed by an Arab capital in addition to being located in one of the Arab countries.

International news agencies are every agency located outside the Arab world.

### **1-4 Official reports and information (data).**

1-4-1 Syrian

1-4-2 Arab

1-4-3 International

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14 Merriam Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/news%20agency>, available on 14 August 2017.

By reports and information is meant all information coming from official institutions and organizations. The organizations related to opposition are not classified under this category, rather it is classified in the opposition related source category.

The same terms and standards, applied on media and news agencies, also apply to these institutions and organizations. That is to say, in order for an organization to be Syrian, it should be located inside Syria and governed by Syrian authorities. In order for these organizations to be considered Arab, they should be located in one of the Arab countries and managed by Arab official authorities. As for the international organizations, they are every organization outside the borders of the Arab world.

### **1-5 Statements by official figures**

1-5-1 Syrian

1-5-2 Arab

1-5-3 International

By official figures or responsible personalities is meant: “A person who holds a position in an organization, government department, etc.<sup>15</sup>”.

### **1-6 Opposition sources**

1-6-1 Civilian activists

1-6-2 Organizations and coordination committees

1-6-3 Political and military figures

Civilian activists are those who present themselves as peaceful opposition or those who take part in and film demonstrations, or those who film the different events like the security activities by the government forces, without having any military role.

Organisations and coordination committees: this refers to all institutions that represent the Syrian opposition, whether the institution is inside Syria or outside. This category includes the opposition media and the political and military coordinates out of which statements and declarations related to the course of events in Syria are issued.

Political and military figures: this category includes all opposition political and military figures present inside or outside Syria regardless of the rank of this figure; a soldier, a general.

### **1-7 Eyewitness**

1-7-1 Identified eyewitness

1-7-2 Unidentified eyewitness

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<sup>15</sup> Reverso Dictionary, <http://dictionary.reverso.net/english-definition/official%20figures> available on 14 August 2017.

An eyewitness is: “A person who actually sees some act, occurrence, or thing and can give a first-hand account of it<sup>16</sup>”.

While classifying data, information may be mixed. A civilian activist might be an eyewitness and vice versa. However, I controlled this category by several indicators: A channel should give the label (eyewitness) to the source, or when it uses indirect expressions like “the people in the region saw”, or when reporter runs conversation with civilians who tell what happened without presenting them as activists. Even when they are affected by events and even when their thoughts are against the government, this doesn’t mean that they are activists. Finally, reporters for other channels might interview eyewitnesses and then the studied channels call these sources to shape their contents.

The identified eyewitness is the person the channel mentions his name or presents other information about him.

The unidentified eyewitness is the person the channel doesn’t mention any information about him, and it only presents his opinion or statements.

## **1.8 The archive**

### **1-8-1 Video**

### **1-8-2 Static images (photographs)**

An archive is: “A collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people<sup>17</sup>”. “Any extensive record or collection of data<sup>18</sup>”

The video and photograph categories were selected for the purpose of knowing the form of archive resources being used and adopted by the channel either to enrich the content of reports or to compensate for the missing elements.

## **1-9 Unidentified sources**

### **1-9-1 Media and agencies**

### **1-9-2 Official reports and statements**

### **1-9-3 Official personalities**

By unidentified sources is meant the sources which were not accurately identified, like when a channel says: *reported by news agencies, according to official reports, or a responsible source issued a statement*, (without giving any other information about these reports, in which country, in which sector...). The indicator that identifies the unknown sources is the shortage of basic information about the source.

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16 Dictionary.com, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/eyewitness> available on 14 August 2017.

17 Oxford Living Dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/archive> available on 14 August 2017.

18 Dictionary.com, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/archive?s=t> available on 14 August 2017.

## **2 – The source orientation category**

2-1 Pro government

2-2 Anti government

2-3 Neutral

I will mention later on more details about the content orientation category. However, it's enough here to talk about the source orientation. This category was divided into three sections, pro, anti-Syrian government, and neutral, regardless of whether the opposition is strong or medium.

The indicator for the source orientation is the direct and manifest content. For example, when the source condemns the activities of the government forces and appeals for international intervention, or when the source defends the activities of these forces and considers them heroic.

The neutral source is the source that stands in the middle between the government and the opposition, either by not having an opinion that favors any party or by criticizing both parties, or by seeking through his statements invitation for restoring calm and giving up violence.

## **3- Topic category**

It is considered one of the most common categories in media and communication research that are made use of to answer the question: What is the content about and what are the most prominent topics? They rely on classifying topics to be studied then dividing each topic into subtopics, from which control and deeper understanding of the main topics can be achieved (Tamar, 2007; Atwi, 2007; Mohsen, 1973).

There are no templates prepared in advance and ready for the topic categories; they differ when the research goals differ (Richard Budd et al, 1992).

Bearing in mind that the research problem is exclusive to studying the internal aspect of the Syrian crisis, public movements, security and military situation, and the conflict results, three main categories were specified for the general category of the topics: public movements, military activities by the conflicting parties, and the results of the conflict.

Each category will be studied separately for several reasons the most important of which: it is not necessary (in this study) to know whether the channel talked more about the public movements or about the security situation, or whether it tackled the results of the conflict more than tackling the military situation. The opposition public movement started in 2011 and continued nearly until the first half of 2012, then the armed movement started being more prominent than peaceful demonstrations. The security and military situation is a continuous state throughout the years being studied by the research. Therefore, comparing the frequency of the mentioning by channels of the peaceful public movement and the frequency of mentioning the security situation would not give fruitful results. Moreover, topics are overlapping; shelling is related to results: deaths, casualties

etc. The other reason stems from the necessity that the topic category should answer the research questions, therefore it was necessary to divide them as follows:

### **3-1 Public movement**

3-1-1 Pro-government

3-1-2 Anti-government

3-1-3 Civilian opposition against armed opposition

Public movement means every unarmed peaceful activity, demonstrations, protests, or strikes. This category was divided into three subcategories:

The pro-government movement which is any activity aiming at supporting President Assad, the government or the Syrian security and military forces.

Anti-government movement means every activity aiming at expressing rejection of Assad as president, rejecting his stances and actions. Also, it means every activity aiming at opposing the policies of the government and the actions of the armed forces.

Civilian opposition against armed opposition means every activity by unarmed anti-government opposition against armed anti-government opposition. The aim of such activity is to reject the course and mistakes by the armed opposition.

The process of calculating frequency for this category: whether the channel has allocated a complete report or part of this report to talk about the public movement, this is considered mentioning for one time, or whether the channel covered in the one report the demonstrations in five counties or in one county, this is also considered mentioning for one time. That is, if the research result that the channel mentioned the pro-government movement five times, this means that five reports have tackled this event.

### **3-2 Activities by the conflicting armed sides**

#### **3-2-1 Government activities**

3-2-1-1 Against civilians

3-2-1-2 Against militants

Government activities mean all activities by the Syrian security and military government forces.

Against civilians means against citizens who do not carry weapons, regardless of whether they are pro, or anti-Syrian government.

Against militants means activities aiming at confronting armed opposition.

#### **3-2-2 Activities by the armed opposition**

3-2-2-1 Against civilians

3-2-2-2 Against the government

By the activities of the armed opposition is meant every activity where weapons are used in order to achieve a certain goal.

Against civilians means against citizens who do not carry weapon, regardless of their political orientations.

Against the government means every activity against the authorities (whether against people or against infrastructure), same for every activity against the Syrian army and the government security forces.

The process of calculating frequency for this category: the method for calculating frequency for this category is different from the method for calculating category for the public movement. This category requires calculating the number of phrases, sentences and sometimes thoughts - in the same report - which tackled the activities by the government or by the armed opposition. Sometimes activities are summarised by one phrase, and sometimes by a sentence or several sentences, and some other times by a whole paragraph or thought.

**Note:** If a channel talks about clashes between the government forces and the opposition forces, this piece of news is classified under two categories simultaneously: the government activities against the militants, and the opposition activities against the government. This might breach one of the conditions that have been agreed to analyse the content, but the study requirements necessitate classifying this news under two categories simultaneously. The significations of using a certain utterance (clashes, battles) will be studied in details in the qualitative analysis chapter.

### **3-3 Consequences of the conflict between the government and the opposition**

#### **3-3-1 Deaths**

3-3-1-1 Government's deaths, civilian and military

3-3-1-2 Opposition's deaths, civilians and military

3-3-1-3 Other party's deaths

The government's deaths, civilian and military, mean all those who support the Syrian government, whether in reality or according to the news context which gives the dead a political identity even when they don't have it in reality. For example, when a channel says the civilians died because they have rejected subjugation and humiliation. This is an indication to that they are opposition. On the other hand, if the channel says those civilians died because they said yes to national unity, in this case this would be an indication that they are pro-government because the phrase (national unity or maintaining national unity) represents the Syrian government rhetoric. In this regard, in order to get accurate results, the classification related to deaths requires analysis of the manifest content but sometimes analysis of latent one. This is because the news context identifies the political identity of the deaths even when the phrases are not direct.



The opposition deaths, civilian and military, mean all those who support the opposition whether in reality or according to the news context. Under this category are the deaths of militants from other nationalities which are not Syrian. For example, militants who came from Jordan to join the Syrian armed opposition.

Other parties' deaths, for example deaths of pro-government forces like Hezbollah, Iraqi factions. This category also includes the neutral Syrian deaths; all those who have no clear and definite stance towards the conflicting parties. Exactly who the other parties' deaths are will be mentioned while stating the results.

The process of calculating the frequency for this category: This process requires studying phrases, sentences or thoughts that dealt with the topic of deaths in the one report. That is, the deaths might be mentioned seven times in two or three reports.

### **3-3-2 Wounded people**

3-3-2-1 Government's wounded, civilian and military

3-3-2-2 Opposition's wounded, civilian and military

3-3-2-3 Other wounded people

Everything said about the deaths' category applies to the wounded' category.

### **3-3-3 Displacement and refuge**

3-3-3-1 Internal

3-3-3-2 Abroad

3-3-3-3 Unspecified

Internal displacement is moving from one place to another inside Syria.

Refuge abroad is moving from Syria to other countries, whether border countries like Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey or other countries like European countries.

By unspecified is meant when the channel does not mention the place where the displaced or refugees are, whose situations and life circumstances are being covered.

The process of calculating the frequency for this category: Whether a whole or partial report is allocated to talk about this topic, it is considered mentioning for one time. If the final result is five times for the refugee topic, this means that five reports tackled this topic.

### **3-3-4 Economic and services situation**

3-3-4-1 Good

3-3-4-2 Medium

3-3-4-3 Bad

Under these categories are living circumstances, the situation of the government and non-government services sectors; water, electricity, communication and so on. They also include working and education circumstances.

*Good* means when the channel presents the situation in Syria as stable and quiet; everything is nearly available and people do not suffer any difficulties in their lives.

*Medium* means that the situations are in a middle stage, not absolutely good and not absolutely bad. There are difficulties, but services and life necessities are still available even though partially.

*Bad* means when there is shortage in many services, life necessities are not available, and people suffering is clear and prominent in the news report.

The process of calculating the frequency for this category: Whether a whole or part of the report is allocated to talk about this topic, it's considered to be mentioning for one time. If the final calculation is five times for the topic of economy and services situation, this means that five reports have tackled this topic.

**Note:** The different ways for calculating the frequency of the subcategories of the category of the conflict results does not affect the accuracy of calculating the percentage for these categories. For example, the deaths category requires calculating the number of sentences or thoughts that tackled this topic. The one report may include tackling the government's deaths, the opposition's deaths, and the neutral deaths. In this case it is supposed to put three ticks (√) in the deaths' category (it's not possible to consider that the report tackled the deaths topic only once). On the other hand, the refugee category does not require calculating sentences, rather the general idea. Therefore, whether a whole or part of the report is allocated for tackling refugee this is considered mentioning for one time. That is to say, one report can tackle the topic of deaths several times (because of the different belonging of the deaths), whereas the refugee topic is considered tackling for one time regardless of the space allocated for the topic.

#### **4- Visual content category**

4-1 Video

4-2 Infographic

4-3 Static image, (photograph)

In quantitative analysis it was enough to search for whether the channel used videos, infographic, or photographs in the studied reports. As for the content and significance of pictures and films they will be studied in the qualitative analysis.

The process of calculating frequencies for this category: Whether the one report included one or more pictures they are recorded for once. The same applies for videos and infographic. That is to say the time duration for each of these contents is not measured. If the final calculation of the

infographic is ten times, this means that 10 reports included infographics regardless of the time space which the infographic took in the report.

### **5- Displaying voices included in the videos**

5-1 Complete display

5-2 Partial display

5-3 Incidental display plus muting the voice

This category is allocated to check the hypothesis related to the ability of channels to exaggerate or simplify events making use of editing techniques.

Complete display is when the voices included in the videos accompany the voice of the report reader (the news narration) throughout the studied report. For example, this happens when the journalist narrates news about demonstrations relying on activists' videos as the source for images and showing the voices of the angry and scared demonstrators. That is when the viewer in full report hears the two voices, the voice of the journalist and the voice of events; as demonstrations and explosions.

If the reporter is available on the ground; in the midst of the event, this is classified under the category of complete display.

Partial display is when the viewer hears part of the voices including the videos. The news narration may tackle the process of bombarding houses of civilians by the government forces. Sometimes the bombardment sound is heard and some other times the channel only displays the voice of the report reader.

Incidental display plus muting the voice. In this case the channel leaves a very narrow space for the voices included in the videos. The voice of the journalist or the report reader is more prominent in synchronisation with videos whose audio content was muted, or when this content was displayed in a very incidental way, maybe no more than a second or a few seconds throughout the whole report. The viewer might see images of bombardment, explosions and can see images of people running in panic but can't hear anything except the news narration.

### **6- Content orientation category**

6-1 Pro government

6-2 Anti government

6-3 Neutral

Following specifying the topics around which the communication messages are about it is necessary to find out the orientation of this content. Is it negative, positive, or neutral regarding an issue or a person? For this purpose, the orientation category is used, which is considered one of

the most used categories while studying the content of media although it raises a problem related to the procedures and criteria of specifying the content orientation (Khosh & Sarai, 2011; Tamar, 2007; Alabd & Azmi, 2009).

One solution to the problem of specifying the orientation is by classifying everything the researcher cannot classify under the subcategory *neutral*. Or when everything that cannot be classified is classified by the researcher under a new subcategory the researcher adds, which take for example the label *other orientations* (Tamar, 2007; M. Hussein, 1983; Toaima, 1989).

I mentioned previously that many researchers are agreed that quantitative analysis of the content should be exclusive to the manifest meaning. According to Robson (1993), analyzing the implicit messages includes explanations that might be characterized by being subjective.

But in reality, studying the manifest content only might not lead to accurate results. The channel may use the calumny through praise method, the method of indirect sarcasm through giving information that carry implicit meanings understood by the recipient who is influenced by the issue being raised, or the person who studied the variables and the given information on this topic. Or maybe the journalists speak in certain voice tones that carry indications opposing the manifest content: like when a journalist confirms that the government did not perpetrate a chemical massacre but speaking in a voice tone which suggests that the government is the only perpetrator.

In this study it has been taken into consideration focusing on the manifest content, but at the same time all other indicators that specify the real orientation of the content were taken into consideration.

The quantitative analysis also allows studying another group of variables like the effective personalities in the event (their characteristics and their actions), the goals of the content and the category of the target audience (Tamar, 2007; Abdul Hamid, 2009). However, studying these details will be realized in the qualitative analysis for the purpose of meeting the research goals. For example, the study purpose is to know how the channels highlighted the actions and characteristics of personalities, not knowing the frequency of appearance of these personalities.

### **- The process of decoding content**

The content of the materials being studied was decoded and the frequency was calculated manually; no software was used for this purpose. In order to guarantee a higher level of accuracy the verbal content of the video reports being studied was transcribed on paper. This method enables calculating frequency in an accurate way, especially when it is related to studying the number of sentences that dealt with a certain topic.

This method also helps conducting qualitative analysis much easier, where the researcher can read the text many times without having to listen to reports. In this way the news text is studied in two different ways: the first outside the video and audio context. The second is analyzing the text within these contexts.

**- Statistical processes**

The statistical processes followed in this study are calculating the frequency and the percentage. The sample of each year (2011, 2012, 2013) was studied separately. Then the frequency and percentage of the whole sample was calculated.

**- Reliability of research and stability of analysis**

The researcher conducted the analysis another time after three weeks from conducting the first analysis. This is one of the methods for measuring the reliability and stability of analysis (Stemler, 2001). The number of categories which include frequency calculation was collated (some categories do not include frequencies like generic and three main categories; considered as classifying categories). The total number was 70 categories. The number of categories for the samples of the three years added to the number of the whole sample categories is 280 categories for each channel. The number of categories for the two channels is 560. The results of 552 categories were identical, that is 98.57%.

**Qualitative Analysis**

The quantitative analysis of the content faced some criticism, one of which is that it was considered a simple technique that does not allow a detailed statistical analysis. That is a technique that does not lead to significant indications (Morgan, 1993), as it neglects many of the messages' aspects (Cheveigné, 2000). Conducting a deep analysis of the content requires adopting a qualitative method because it helps understanding the message of the manifest and implicit meanings, and possibly may lead to understanding possible influences by the media message over the target audience (Macnamara, 2005).

Some researchers consider the qualitative analysis is based on rules of conversation analysis (Charaudeau, *et.al*, 2001; Charaudeau, Maingueneau, 2002; Cislaru, Guérin, Morim, Née, Pagnier, Veniard, 2007) which is interested in studying speech or conversation (Charaudeau, Maingueneau, 2002). There are different visions about the boundaries of conversation analysis. According to Dubois (1962) such analysis is classified under the paradigm of linguistics which targets studying discursive applications of the society. B. Johnstone argues that discourse analysis is a means for studying the structural and functional aspects of the language being used. This is achieved through breaking down the material being studied into parts and analyzing them according to more than one perspective. As for Pêcheux, this approach relies on studying language on critical, philosophical, and political basis at the same time. However, Foucault went beyond the domain that only studies language and included a group of other components like behaviors and institutions. That is to say, conversation analysis does not only study vocabulary, sentence structure and stylistics.

Several approaches can be considered for conversation analysis including: Conversational analysis (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1996), the analysis of the argument (Breton, 2007), the pragmatic (Reboul Moeschler, 1998), the theory of enunciation (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997), or the semiotic analysis (Saussure, 1915).

This study aims at analyzing the different components of the media message, the linguistic and non-linguistic components. For this reason, the semiotic approach was adopted.

The semiotic approach is one of the main branches interested in analyzing media materials and the verbal and non-verbal communication (Emir, 2014). This approach was successfully applied to qualitative research interested in studying the media content. This method helps revealing implicit meanings (Barthes, 1972). Relying on semiotic approach for analyzing the content of audio and visual communication is prominent, because it allows understanding and realizing various factors and aspects simultaneously. The available methods in the semiotic field enable describing and explaining the details of messages, thus leading to ability of understanding the mechanisms for creating, producing, and transferring meanings (Domenjoz, 1998; Clause Bruhn Jensen, 2002).

Semiotics also called semiology was first defined by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure as “the science of signs” (Sibhan Chappman, Christopher Routledge, 2009; Domenjoz, 1998). Semiology is a term used to designate the production and interpretation of a sign (Hadumod Busmann, 1996). It is the sciences of significations (Sidad, 2003).

Barthes (1985) considers semiotics the only tool for ideological criticism. This approach allows studying the significations of synchronised verbal and non-verbal codes within the same message (Barakat, 2002). It also allows studying the pre and post contexts of the message (Gervereau, 2000). Saussure sees that semiotics is the study of the life of signs within social life (Domenjoz, 1998). It’s not possible to study the content of media in isolation of the social-cultural context (Emir, 2014).

Saussure considers that language or linguistics represent only one part of semiology, whereas Barthes considers that semiotics constitutes only a branch of linguistics because every semiotic system overlapping with language; things, images, behaviours etc. strongly have indications, but can’t do that in isolation of language. He also argues that human civilisation is still a civilisation of writing till today, although images are invading life of man (Barthes, 1987). Robert Schulze (1994) considers that man identity is related to his writing ability; there is a correlation between the existence of man and his ability to produce texts.

Saussure sees the linguistic sign as not a thing and name but a concept and a sound image (Saussure, 1915), and the two components are strongly united. The language is a system of signs which explain the ideas (Domenjoz, 1998).

According to Umberto Eco (2005) man reads the surrounding universe and expresses it through different systems of signs, whether they were a language, drawing, or symbols.

Communication processes and daily events, even the simple ones, are only achieved through signs. Semiology includes all symbolic systems; languages, traffic lights, military signs, images, films, legends, rituals, music, sounds, etc. (Bernard Lamizet, Ahmed Silem, 1994; Domenjoz, 1998). All forms of signs are considered conductors of culture and ideology (Barthes, 1972) for they constitute system of significations (Barthes, 1968).

A sign is something that replaces another thing (Eco, 2005). There are linguistic signs and semiotic signs like clothes and food, signs that are characterized by benefit and functionality. Semiotics studies internal organization and interaction among these signs (Barthes, 1985; Barthes 1968; John Fisk 1990). Barthes labeled semiotic signs as functional signs because they are used (for example clothes) and have meaning at the same time. For Saussure, these signs are a system of codes through which we can understand the world (Shank, 1995).

According to Peirce, a sign is characterised by three dimensions. *The concreteness of the sign* which means that a sign is something. *The dynamic of the sign*, because every sign has a purpose or is used for somebody. Finally, *the relativity of interpreting the sign* (Vincent Jouve, 1994; Barakat, 2002).

Barthes and Saussure divided the sign into a signifier and signified. The signifiers bear different explanations. That is, each signifier could have several signifieds. These signifieds also generate other indications (Vincent Jouve, 1994; Barakat, 2002). A signifier is something concrete (physical); sound, image and text, whereas the nature of the signified is mental and psychological. Barthes (1985) considers that the signifier is the expression and signified is the meaning. According to Eco (1988), a sign has three dimensions, signifier, signified, and a referent.

The sign is not poor, and not exclusive to one meaning; it may be rich with indications. There is no fixed rule that governs the relation between signifier and signified because signified is always related to contexts. A word, speech and all symbols are signs that carry different significances according to cultures (Eco, 2005). The impact also differs according to the interpreter of the text, image or symbol. Significance and impact depend on the culture of the consumer, his pre-knowledge and his cultural taste. In other words, there are several factors and stimuli that make the indication and the impact of the signifier something relative that differs according to the different cultures and people (Eco, 2001). The meanings of texts and messages are constructed according to the perception of the recipient (Cheveigné, 2000).

According to Saussure and Eco, there are present and absent signifiers. Also, there are direct and indirect, lexical and perceptual signifieds. The sign could be iconic, rhetoric, suggestive, functional and semiotic (Eco, 2001, 2005). Barthes sees that there are two levels for significance

or meaning, denotative and connotative levels. This leads to having different interpretations of the message (D. Morsli et al, 1995; Clause Jensen, 2002).

Denotation is the first level of signification; it means the permanent sense of a word excluding all subjective evaluations<sup>19</sup>. Connotation is an idea suggested by a word in addition to its main meaning (Oxford dictionary<sup>20</sup>). Connotative signs can be personal and individual or general and universal (Cuddon, 1998). The subjectivity is a factor which allows more interpretations to the text (Barthes, 1968). Barthes showed how even nonverbal communication is open to interpretations through connotative meanings.

In this study, semiotic analysis is divided into a group of topics according to the nature of these topics: public movements, pro and against the Syrian government, the picture of the president and the Syrian government, the image of the armed opposition, the results of the Syrian crisis, the picture of ethnicities and religious sects.

Each topic includes studying linguistic signs, images, sounds and other signs related to the same topic. In other words, signs were not classified according to their nature; linguistic, visual or acoustic. Rather, according to the topics they deal with. The purpose of this classification is to facilitate understanding how the channels covered each topic separately. This classification allows concentrating and knowing all the signs that create mental images in the mind of the recipient about the one topic.

### **Linguistic signs**

Saussure differentiated between language and discourse. Language is a collection of systems and rules possessed by a human group and used for conversation and communication. On the other hand, discourse represents the applied manifestation of these systems and rules (Barakat, 2002). This study aims at knowing the significations of the discourse to which a group of linguistic rules and methods were applied; metaphor, metonymy, analogy, comparison, and the direct and indirect way (declarative and implicit). Eco (2005) considers that these rules are signs that establish relations with topics, which leads to creating mental images. For example, comparing a man to a lion. Comparison (the sign) established relation with the topic (the man) which led to creating a mental image: the man is strong and great like the lion.

The media rhetoric is a cultural industry (Al-Imam, 1995), an industry that combines language and information within their different contexts and the technical mechanisms used to transmit the content. This production forms the awareness of the recipient (Al-Aqed, 2002). Through applying linguistic rules channels can transmit facts accurately or they can distort them. Barthes (1985)

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19 Oxford Living Dictionary, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/denotation> available on 14 August 2017.

Reverso Dictionary, <http://dictionnaire.reverso.net/francais-definition/d%C3%A9notation> available on 14 August 2017.

20 Oxford Living Dictionary, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/connotation> available on 14 August 2017.



considers exaggeration, for example, is deviation from the truth. The deviation of signifiers generates other signifiers (Eco, 2005). Based on this principle, the research seeks to know the characteristics of the discourse aiming at exaggerating, simplifying or showing facts as they are.

### **Non-verbal signs**

Analysing the content of the images and the semantic analysis can be carried out simultaneously (Shank, 1995). Picture is a dangerous means and a huge machine for moving groups; the picture creates a world opinion. It is a non-verbal language able to stir and motivate the viewer mentally and emotionally (Barthes, 1972). The seen or imagined picture is a sign or group of signs that form a relation with the reality whether concrete or abstract. Studying any image means studying the signs included in this image (Toussaint, 1978; A. Mansour, 2014; Najib, 2003). Barthes (1980) considers that all the details included in the picture have meanings; the shape of the hat, the necktie, the colour of clothes are all signifiers that have indications.

Believing something relies on seeing. Seeing something creates a collection of mental processes, knowledge and cognition. Seeing is the main way for knowledge (Gervereau, 2000, 2001; Le Breton, 2006).

The visual image can give an impression of concreteness (H. Jamieson, 2007). Gervereau (2001) classified the image into a mental image and a physical image. This research aims at studying the physical pictures which tackled the Syrian event and also at knowing the possible mental pictures, created by seeing the physical pictures. According to Gervereau (2000), analysing pictures passes through three stages: description, studying context, and finally interpretation. The analysis also includes studying the iconography; persons and things, in addition to studying techniques, colours, voices and kinds of shots (DC.Meyer, 2000-2006<sup>21</sup>).

### **The Semiotic Analysis for This Research**

The verbal and non-verbal signifiers have been extracted and classified in accordance with their topics. The first step is characterized by classifying the signifiers in the areas of the following main topics: the demonstrations supporting and opposing Al-Assad and the government; the image of president Assad as it has been presented by the two channels; the image of the government security and military forces; the image of the armed opposition; the conflict outcomes; and the image of ethnics and sects that have been highlighted by media. Next, the main topics have been divided into sub-topics. For instance, all the signifiers which deal with the pro-Assad processions (as a main topic) have been extracted, then they were pigeonholed into sub-topics such as the purpose of demonstrating, the slogans, the numbers of demonstrators, the places, and the Interviews with

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21 DC.Meyer, [http://www.french.hku.hk/dcmScreen/lang3033/lang3033\\_pub\\_lexique.htm](http://www.french.hku.hk/dcmScreen/lang3033/lang3033_pub_lexique.htm) available on 14 August 2017.

the demonstrators, taking into consideration the significances of age, gender, clothes and other signs.

The classification can be also considered as one of the research results because each sub-heading in the semiotic analysis represents an outcome that contains signifiers which tackle one topic. The interlacing between the two levels of significance, the denotative and connotative, has been taken into consideration. First of all, the analysis depends on general description where the signifiers are put into their general contexts, then they are studied one by one. Each signifier requires independent explanation; therefore, I have not put them in tabulated groups. I have, rather, put them in a narrative frame to facilitate explanation and understanding. The value of some signifiers is connected to the historical context which they evoke, others need analyzing the linguistic structure, while some others derive their value from their relation to religious or customary values predominant in the recipient's environment. I consider the contexts, in which some signs are put, signifiers in themselves. These contexts are essential to uncover the mechanisms of spreading propaganda and those of psychological war and manipulating the recipient. Therefore, it is necessary to study the contexts of mentioning the sources, those of sentimental enticements, those of historical recalls, those of employing the characteristics of Arabic language, those of adopting images, and those of spotlighting and obfuscating. The significances of contexts and meanings of signs help us recognize the identity of the targeted recipient of messages. Analyzing the significances of media personnel's voice tone is considered a part of the semiotic analysis of this study, too.

### **Multidisciplinary Approach**

For the purpose of analysing the news coverage, several disciplines should take part, in addition to the necessity to take into consideration the many variables that influence the mechanisms of media, thus influencing the awareness of the recipient who receives the messages of this medium. The most prominent variables are: the media logic which has two divisions, the media being studied which is a mass media (TV) in addition to professional practises by journalists. The second variable is the war logic, conflicts and using the media as a communication weapon.

The disciplines that were made use of are: information and communication sciences, media sociology, politics, linguistics, history, propaganda and misleading, military sciences, sociology, and religion.

To reveal the indications of some signifiers, it is necessary to rely on the observation method. Observation helps the researcher recognise closely the phenomenon under study (Bin Morsli, 2003). Observation is not exclusive to focusing the senses only; it is also subject to mental processes (M. Al-Hasssan, 2009). It is examining the thing as it is, in order to know something new (Bohosh, 1999). Information are collected through listening or viewing something (Atwi, 2007). Observation enables describing events, people or subjects being studied (Marshall and

Rossmann, 1989). It is a process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day activities by active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, and writing detailed field notes (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte, 1999).

The researcher experienced events in Syria and contacted a variety of segments in the Syrian society. Observation is necessary to explain some details and the purposes of some media messages, because there is no accurate research dealing with these details.

## **The Theoretical Framework of the Research**

This study is related to a group of interconnected theories: The Agenda-setting Theory, News Framing Theory, and the Gate keeping Theory.

### **Gatekeeping Theory**

This theory was developed by Kurt Lewin in 1943. Its content is that the media material goes through several points (Gates) during its journey. Each gate is controlled by influential people who decide what should be included or deleted out of this material. That is to say, they control the kind and content of information that are broadcast and presented to the public. The longer the stages of production and information reception by the recipient are the bigger the influence of the directors of these gates becomes. The stages or corridors of the information are like the chain that is formed by several links, the direct contact is considered the simplest kind of these links.

A group of influencing factors and criteria organise and control the processes of evaluating and selecting the content. The most prominent of which are: the means being subject to the ideologies that run and direct the mechanisms for producing information. And the journalist being subject himself to the conditions of the means; the financial, social, educational, intellectual, and religious status of the communicator. The social restrictions; values, customs, and cultural stereotypes that lead to predicting the public reactions to the messages (Shomaker & Vos, 2009).

### **The Agenda-setting Theory**

This theory is interested in studying relations between the mass media and the public exposed to such media. And it emphasizes that there is a close connection between the salience of a certain issue in the media and its salience amongst the sections of society (Abu Hassouna, 2015). The origin of this theory goes back to Walter Lippmann in his book: *The public opinion* (1922). Lippmann sees that mass media constructs mental images amongst the public about events. However, in many cases the public opinion is shaped when the media presents false information about issues that are of interest to the society; the recipient consumes these products and believes them (M. McCombs, 2011).

Agenda setting refers to the process through which the media determines the issues that concern the public or provoke thinking about a certain topic; that is to say, agenda setting is a process of

determining important issues (J. Straubhaar & R. Larose, 2000; M.Sanchez, 2002); it is ordering topics according to their importance (J. Watson, 2006).

The media can also highlight some events as being important topics even when they are not really so. Sometimes the purpose of highlighting is provoking government or societal reactions through attracting attention to some issues; highlighting makes the issues being raised a priority in the agenda of the recipient. The adoption by the individual of the mass media as a source of information determines how he realizes the realistic events. Appreciating the importance of the topic and adopting a stance regarding this topic (positive, negative or neutral), are directly related to how the media presents the same topic, the size of interest, and the nature of the stances towards the issue being raised (Al-Mazahra, 2012).

Lippmann sees that the reaction of the recipient is towards the pictures or information presented to him, not towards the events that are actually happening; that are real events. Accordingly, the process of agenda setting aims at re-shaping events; reshaping reality, and then presenting this production to the interested public in order to achieve particular goals (M.Sanchez, 2002).

Who sets the public agenda and who sets the media agenda? Lang sees that agenda setting is an interactive process in which governments, societies and mass media take part; each one affects the other (Nasr, 2003). The processes of selecting news and selecting particular sources and how to tackle these topics, are subject to the nature of the relation between the media and the decision-makers; officials in high-ranking positions; positions that are political, military, economic or religious (Nasr, 2003). Determining priorities corresponds to the editorial policy of the media institution which aims at influencing the recipient and changing his orientations. At the same time, this policy or media ideology is affected by a group of variables that impose on it a particular ordering of priorities (Abu Hassouna, 2015).

The overlap between the media agenda and the public agenda gave the recipient of the message a special importance. The recipient understands and realizes the media messages according to his own agenda; according to the size of his interest and his stance towards the issue (Abdul Hamid, 2004). The influencing power of the media agenda depends on the personal experience of the recipient; does he live the issue being raised? Or his relation with this issue is indirect; he doesn't live it and he has no personal experiences; he receives his information from the media (Amer, 2008)?

The media has to take into consideration the interest of society in a certain issue. Therefore, the media is affected by the priorities of the public directly or indirectly. At the same time this media can create interest among, or change priorities of the recipients (Makkawi & Assayed, 2000; Fahmi, 1999; M. McCombs & D. Shaw, 1972).

Shomaker & Resse consider that the characteristics of those who work in media, their cultural and educational levels, their professional backgrounds, their orientations towards the topics being tackled and their income levels, affect the agenda setting (Nasr, 2003). Wanta and McCombs see that media affect each other. For example, low-profile media are affected by high-profile media; the interest and the way a world leading newspaper tackles a certain event may affect the coverage of low-profile newspapers of the same event (Bassiouni, 2008).

### **Agenda-setting tools**

Highlighting a topic and neglecting another. Covering a particular side of a certain issue to the detriment of another side which leads to granting the recipient incomplete knowledge. The selection of sources, pictures, graphic, typography elements, and other methods for media processing (Soliman, 1999; Al-Qadi, 2008). According to G.E Lang & K.Lang, some topics need more coverage to attract attention. The issues being raised should be put in frames that give them meaning and make the process of understanding and realizing easy and possible; the realization by the public of the issues is closely connected to the selection of vocabulary and the language being used, and that the trust of the recipient in the people selected to talk about topics increases the influencing power (Soliman, 1999; Nasr, 2003). The intensive coverage of a certain issue leads to establishing this issue in the public agenda. The intensive coverage creates orientations and leads the recipient to adopt a certain behavior towards the issues (Rabie, 2008). The time duration; the length and shortness of the coverage have importance in creating impressions (Soliman, 1999).

### **Methodology that can be adopted to analyze the agenda**

Analysing the communication content quantitatively and qualitatively. The researcher can study an issue or a group of issues that are tackled by the media whether within one period of time or within different periods (Al-Mazahra, 2012). Interviewing or surveying officials about the process of setting priorities for the media; those who supervise the processes of selecting and processing. It is also possible to observe the media action from within through observation to get to know the mechanisms and standards of selecting and excluding topics by the media (Al-Qadi, 2008).

### **News Framing Theory**

This theory is employed to explain and clarify the role of media in shaping the knowledge and orientations of the public about different issues and events (Pippa Norris,1995; Abdu, 2009). It allows measuring the explicit and implicit content of the news coverage (Ahmed, 2009). Frames can be studied whether through quantitative or qualitative analysis. McCombs, Shaw and Weaver consider News framing theory as an extension or a second level of the Agenda-Setting Theory. Scheufele (1999) believes that these two theories are similar.

The news frames are the ones that give meanings to the events and issues. Therefore, constructing frames is considered a critical media practice; a journalist should choose the suitable frame to present the event being covered (Mohsen, 2009).

In his book *Framing Analysis* (1974), Erving Goffman argues that a frame is a mixture of processes of classifying, organizing and interpreting reality in a way that leads to placing events in their contexts, thus facilitating the process of understanding information (Oweis, 2008). Placing events in their contexts gives meaning to the content (Abdul Hamid, 2004). According to London, a frame is specifying the case or the news story, organizing thoughts and perceiving events (S. London, 1993).

Entman sees that framing is a selective process through which selecting some elements of a real case or event takes place, where these elements are highlighted in order to achieve a particular goal (Entman, 2003, 2007).

De Vreese argues that frames determine the issue being raised; they highlight aspects of the issue and neglect or ignore other aspects (De Vreese et al, 2001; Ahmed, 2007, 2009). Highlighting elements or marginalizing them happens for the purpose of achieving ideological goals related to the communicator or the means producing the news rhetoric (Bassiouni, 2008). Frames are a group of methods used to describe a problem, specify its causes, study its dimensions and the variables that affect it, know the effective powers that stand behind it, and then expect or set solutions for it (Entman, 1993; Makkawi & Assayed, 2000; Abdu, 2009).

According to Tushman and Entman, there is a close connection between media frames and the priorities of the public; frames organize and influence reality because they are able to direct the attention of the recipient to a certain event or to elements of this event, thus leading to creating an orientation or behavior in response to that event (Scheufele, 1999; Entman, 1993). News frames create standards that are used by the public when they think of a certain issue or when they form their opinions and orientations about it (Ahmed, 2009; Mazroue, 2013). Frames construct the knowledge of the recipient (Mohsen, 2009). In this way, it is possible to predict how the public interprets reality and events (Makkawi & Assayed, 2000; Mazroue, 2013).

### **How to build news frames**

Entman refers to that constructing news frames happens through several methods: choosing the main words; keywords, metaphorical description, concepts, symbols, and visual images (Entman, 1991).

Capella and Jamieson emphasize the necessity that frames should be different from each other; the necessity that they should contain different linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics, in addition to the validity to represent the event. In other words, the case should be true, not faked by the media people (Oweis, 2008). Building frames happens through several mechanisms: the

selection mechanism; focusing on aspects and neglecting others, the highlighting mechanism; repetition is one of the means which help establish information in the mind of the recipient, the exclusion mechanism; ignoring some aspects of the topic whether intentionally or unintentionally (Kamal, 2008).

Gamson and Lasch see that it is possible to construct frames through a group of several sentimental and mental tools; achieving accord and harmony amongst these tools makes the impact of the message stronger (Najm, 2006). Sentimental tools are like: attractive phrases, rhetorical styles; metaphor, figure of speech, comparing, pun, giving examples to facilitate understanding, in addition to the content of the visual images. Mental tools could be something like: numbers, statistics and diagrams, giving the recipient explanations about the causes of the event and predicting results.

Frames could also be determined through the orientation of the media towards the topic; negative, positive or neutral (Kevin M. Carrage, 1991), or through: printing characteristics, for example the headings; main or sub, the sources and their orientations towards the event, and through the content of quotations and comments (Tan Kard, 2001).

Lyengar and Simon (1993) defined two kinds of frames: Episodic frames and Thematic Frames. The episodic frame presents concrete issues; physical, like explosions, bombardment, theft, while thematic frames focus on issues characterized by being general and abstract. These frames increase the difficulty of influencing and persuading because of the difficulty of dealing with problems; following their causes and predict their solutions (Abdul Hamid, 2004).

McCombs et al (1997) differentiated between two kinds of the attributes of news frames (Salem, 2009). These attributes show the mechanism for building stereotypes about the realities, peoples and effective personalities. First, the Substantive Attributes; they manifest through presenting basic information about the issue without evaluation; the subjectivity of the sender does not show up. Second, the Affective Attributes, which are characterized by judgment or evaluation; the subjectivity shows itself through presenting information in a context which is either pro, anti, or neutral.

The Pan and Kosicki (1993) paradigm for analysing news frames is based on studying a group of factors: first the syntactical construction of the story; succession of the details and paragraphs, that is studying how to structure the news event. This part also includes studying the sources. Second, the thematic structure; studying the main and pivotal ideas in the text. Third, the rhetorical structure. Grammar and stylistics are used to support the pivotal thoughts, thus helping achieve the goal of the sender (D'Angelo, 2002).

Frames can also be classified on the basis of their nature; negative or positive (Tversky & Kahneman, 1984). Valkenburg and Semetko classified frames according to the kind of issues and events: The frame of conflict, whether among individuals, groups, institutions, or countries. The responsibility frame; in this frame the link between the event and individuals is established; who caused the problem? The humanitarian issues frame; this frame includes interests, activities, sufferings and all humanitarian aspects. The economy results frame and other frames which tackle different topics (Ahmed, 2009).

McCombs & Chyi added other criteria for classifying frames. The place-frame. It has several levels: international, national; like racial discrimination, local, the group level; the link between the issue and a particular group inside the country, and also the individual level; the link between individuals and issues or events. Second, the time frame. The most prominent attributes of the news coverage is being momentary and new. However, there are exceptions. Some frames care about events or issues related to previous time dimension; the past. And some frames care about the future, like when presenting predictions, expectations about, or solutions to some issues (Entman, 2003).

### **Some factors that affect the construction of news frames**

Entman, Scheufele, and Shomaker talked about the influencing factors that determine the nature of news frames. The most prominent of which are: the attributes of the media person; his knowledge, education, experience, professional level, and his orientations towards issues. The media person sets frames whether consciously or unconsciously. The orientation of the means; the editorial policy of the media. This influencing factor plays a major role in building the news frames where the media tends to broadcast information that suit the ideology or beliefs of its owners and directors. The means is also affected by the influence of some political, social and religious powers. In this context, we see how the media is subject to the ruling powers and how the media person in the end is subject to the decisions of the means. The recipient is also considered an important affecting factor in frame construction. On the one hand he is the target of persuading; the means tries to influence him. On the other hand, the range of knowledge and awareness by the recipient gives information different meanings, thus it contributes in framing and classifying the idea. The sources and the presence or absence of some vocabulary have a great impact. The nature of the events themselves is considered one of the most important influencing factors. Some issues impose their presence in the media due to their importance to all parties contributing in the communication process; the sender, the means, and the recipient (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; Abdul Hamid, 2004; Attieh, 2005; Oweis, 2008).



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## Chapter 3

### An Overview on Syria

#### Introduction

Studying the features of the Syrian crisis and studying the content of media coverage of this crisis require referring back to the Syrian history. The characteristics of the society, its actions and reactions towards any case are related to the cognitive accumulations of this society. The “genetic”, cultural, intellectual, religious, and sentimental heritage influences deciding the track of individual behaviors, whether the individual is aware or unaware of the mechanism of such influence.

According to archaeologists, Syria is considered to be the cradle of the earliest human civilisations. Many cities and kingdoms were established over this land, including Ebla, Mari, Ugarit, Aphamea and Palmyra. Many peoples lived in Syria, whether based on peaceful means, through migration or commerce, or through wars. The most prominent of these peoples are the Sumerians, the Akkadians, the Chaldeans, the Canaanites, the Arameans, the Hittites, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Nabatis, the Byzantines, and the Arabs. The Ottoman Turks ruled Syria for four centuries, then this country went under the French mandate between 1920 and 1946 (Al-Helu, 2004; Jad El-Rab, 2005; Troudi, 2006; Balanche, A, 2006; duMont, 2012).

There are some assumptions about the origin of the name Syria. The name is derived from the Syriac word (*Sir*), which means *the master*. The feminine name is *Sara* and *Syria*, which mean *the master ground* or *the ground of the masters*. The name is derived from the Greek description; *Assur* and *Assyria*, (the land of the Assyrians). According to the Phoenicians, the name Syria is considered to be an expression for the *land of the sun* (Al-Hariri, 2013)<sup>22</sup>

The current Syria is considered part of the Greater Syria or the Levant which were divided into smaller countries (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine) according to the Sykes Picot accord; the British-French accord in 1916, which aimed at distributing shares among colonial countries. Under the patronage of the British mandate, the state of Israel was created in 1948 and Palestine was also divided (Sultan, 1987; Al-Rubaie, 2005; Troudi, 2006). The geographical location of Syria increases its importance. Its borders with Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey, and its nearness to Palestine and the locations of Israeli presence placed it in the heart of conflicts and wars (duMont, 2012).

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22 Al-Maany Dictionary. <https://www.almaany.com/ar/name/%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7/>

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The current Syria is made up of 14 governorates, each one is further divided into smaller administrative units: region, city, town, village, farm, and a square; 61 regions, 210 towns, 6247 villages, and 6717 farms (Qatash, 2002; Troudi, 2006).

### **Religious and Sectarian Distribution of the Syrian Population**

The Syrian population is estimated to be 23000000 people. The Sunni Muslims form the majority; their population is estimated to be more than 75%, when the Sunni Kurds' population is included. The population percentage of the Alawites ranges between 10% and 15%; their population is growing systematically. The Alawites are mainly found in the counties of Latakia, Tartus, and the countryside of the two counties Homs and Hama. The Druze sect constitutes nearly 3%, mainly present in the county of Sweida and the Golan Heights. The Ismaelites constitute 1%, living in Salamiyeh, Qadmus, Alkhawabi, and Misyaf. The *Twelver* Shia constitutes 0.3%. The Christian percentage ranges between 8 and 10%; half of them are Orthodox. The Christian churches observed in Syria are the Evangelical Armenian, Evangelical National Christian, Orthodox Syriac, Catholic Syriac, Chaldean Catholic Church, Maronite Church, Orthodox Armenian, Catholic Roman Church, Assyrian Church of the East, and the Church of Jesus the King for the Chaldean Catholics in the governorate of Al-Hasaka (Troudi, 2006; S.Abdo, 2009; duMONT, 2012).

Most of the Jews left Syria to Palestine. Their population was 4.4% in Damascus and 4.3% in Aleppo until the year 1943. The Kurds constitute nearly 9% of the total population; some of them are Muslims and some others are Yazidis (Ayazidis). There are no accurate statistics about the number of the Yazidis in Syria. Turkmen and Turks are 1%, as are the Circassians. The number of the Chechens ranges between 10000 – 15000 (Troudi, 2006; S.Abdo, 2009; duMONT, 2012).

The Christians and Druze follow their own legal systems and legislative courts in relation to Personal Status issues. The other sects follow the Islamic-sharia-based law. The Syrian social construction was affected in recent decades because of the migration from the countryside to cities in addition to immigration abroad. The Syrian crisis also changed the demographic and numerical map of the Syrians (S.Abdo, 2009).

### **Languages Spoken in Syria**

Arabic is the official language of the country. Syrian people speak Arabic with local dialects. On a daily basis, people do not use standard Arabic. Aramaic and Syriac are still spoken by inhabitants of some small villages like Malula, Jabadeen, and a part of Saydnaya and Yabrud in the countryside of Damascus, or in the north east of Syria like Qamishli, Qahtaniyeh, Hasaka, and Khabur. There are other languages spoken by some minorities in Syria like Kurdish, Armenian, Turkic, and Circassian. English is taught in schools. French is also taught in schools but to a narrow level (Qatash, 2002; S.Abdo, 2009; duMONT, 2012).

## Rule in Syria

Syria never enjoyed a self-rule. For a long period of time Syria was subject to foreign rule (Chouet, 1995). I will go back in history to the era of occupation of Syria by Alexander the Great in 333 BC. The Macedonian Empire broke apart following his death, and Syria was ruled by the leader Seleucus who established the Seleucid Empire in the year 312 BC (Hajal, 2004). The Romans took over Syria in the year 64 BC. At the time, Syria was in state of chaos because of the Seleucid rule and the successive wars that broke out among the parties fighting for power. The western part of the Levant (*Bilad Alsham*) came under the Roman rule, while the eastern part (Mesopotamia) was under the Persian control (Al-Hariri, 2013). Syria had a pivotal importance for the Romans; it was placed under the supervision of a Roman consul who had the authority to recruit armies and declare war. This is because Syria was the confrontation line with the Persians (Hajal, 2004).

The Byzantine rule in Syria started in 330 AD. This period was marked by the recognition of Christianity by Emperor Constantine as an official religion (Hajal, 2004). The demise of the Byzantine rule in Syria started when the Muslim armies entered the Levant and defeated the Romans after Alyarmuk battle in 636 AD (Al-Helu, 2004). After the death of the Prophet Mohammad, the first caliphate launched wars against the tribes that renounced Islam. Following his victory over the apostates, this caliphate and the following caliphates had dedicated time to what is called 'Islamic conquests'<sup>23</sup>. Many books about the Islamic religion heritage talk about the peacefulness of conquering many Syrian cities. The Syrians surrendered to the Muslims without fighting. The second group of cities were conquered after a long besiegement of huge Roman garrisons, like Damascus, Raqqa, and Homs. The third group was conquered after long and ferocious battles (Takkoush, 2002).

The Omayyad Muslims ruled Syria from 662 until 750 AD. After that, Syria was ruled by the Muslim Abbasids from 750 until 1258 AD. The Abbasid Caliphate ended after the Mongols, led by Hulagu, occupied Baghdad; Syria then came under the Mongol rule from 1259 until 1260. The Mamluk Sultanate (One of the Islamic states that rose in Egypt) triumphed over the Mongols, thus Syria came under the Mamluk rule until the year 1516; at that time the Ottoman armies invaded the Levant and Damascus became an Ottoman province until the year 1919 AD (Al-Helu, 2004). The Ottoman sultans used to be titled as the Muslims' caliphates (Sultan, 1987). After the defeat of the Ottoman Sultanate, Syria came under the French mandate. King Faisal Ibn Al-Hussain was crowned as a king of Syria. This country was divided following the order of the French ruler into four states: The state of Damascus, the State of Aleppo, The State of Druze, and the State of the Alawites. In the year 1946 the French forces were evacuated from all Syrian land. Syria joined the

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<sup>23</sup> The purpose of such naming is legalising wars launched by the Muslims and giving a sublime mental image about these wars; not being out of motivation for occupying and controlling the riches of the peoples invaded by Muslim armies, rather, for the sake of spreading the religion of God.

Arab League on the basis of a charter signed in the year 1945; Syria is considered a founding member of this organisation (Al-Rubaie, 2005; Mehli, 2011).

After independence from France, Syria did not enjoy political stability. Military coups were commonplace during the period between 1949 and 1954. In 1958 a union between Syria and Egypt was established under the name 'The United Arab Republic' and continued until the year 1961 under the leadership of the Egyptian leader Jamal Abdul Naser. The different inclinations, interests, and political visions led to the separation of the two countries. After that, Syria came back to the era of military coups (Qatash, 2002; Al-Hariri, 2013).

Al-Baath Party took over the power in Syria in 1963 through a military action, called by some a 'coup' and called by some others 'The Revolution of the 8<sup>th</sup> of March' conveying that it changed the nature of the political authority, where for the first time power was reached by social forces comprised mostly by the middle class in cities and the countryside. This happened thanks to the coalition between workers, peasants, the revolutionary educated, and some small bourgeois groups (Habib, 1989; Hussein, 1996; Ghalioun, 2002-2003).

However, conflicts spread among members of Al-Baath Party and the schism widened amongst the leadership following the victory of Israel over the armies of Syria, Egypt and Jordan in the year 1967; Israel took over vast areas of Arab land including the Syrian Golan Heights (Qatash, 2002). At that time, Hafez Al-Assad was minister of defence and a member of the regional leadership of Al-Baath Party. He was opposing the policies of the president and the policies of some of Al-Baath Party leaders. In 1970, Al-Assad led what is known as the 'Correctionist November Movement'; the most prominent features of this movement are a military coup against the president of the country and the secretary general of Al-Baath Party Nour Eldin Al-Atasi and appointing Ahmad Alkhatib as a temporary president. According to the supporters of this movement, it was imperative to abolish differences among the members of Al-Baath Party, and also it was imperative unifying forces and organising priorities; the conflict with Israel had to gain the main interest (Hussein, 1996).

In 1971 Al-Assad held the position of Syria's president, backed by the army. He gained the favouring of many sectors of the Syrian society thanks to reconstructing the Syrian army and winning over Israel in the October War in 1973.

President Assad was also the secretary general of the Socialist Al-Baath Party and the higher commander of the army and military forces. Al-Baath was the party 'leading the country and the society' throughout the rule of Al-Assad (Troudi, 2006). The slogan of this party is: *One Unified Arab Nation with an Eternal Message*. Its goals are: union, freedom, and socialism. That refers to the union of the Arab nation, liberation from occupation and imperialism, and establishing a socialist Arab system. The principles of the party emphasise the pioneering role of Syria in the Pan Arab Movement and the duty of the army to protect the homeland and guarantee the stability and safety of the people (Habib, 1989; Troudi, 2006; Haddad, 2007).

### **- Syria During the Time of Hafez Al-Assad**

There are differences in the historical and analytical readings of the personality of president Hafez Al-Assad and the events witnessed during the period of his leadership. Kamal Deeb (2015) sees that the policies of Al-Assad laid foundations for stability after the period when the country was living time of chaos and coups; such policies also positioned Syria as a regional player within the context of conflicts inside and for the Middle East. Deeb considers the year 1970 as the year of change in Syria, since the Assad era ended the era of internal competing for positions among the leadership of Al-Baath Party (Deeb, 2015).

In the 70s and 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Syria went through several internal and external crises, starting from launching the October war against Israel in 1973, through entering the Lebanese war in 1976 and the break out of a militant Islamic movement inside the country between 1979 and 1982. The Muslim Brotherhood used their Sunni sectarian position to attack the ruling regime led by Assad, being an 'Alawite rule' and that the claim for secularisation by the regime is nothing but another crime reflecting the heresy and infidelity of the Alawites. The rising popularity of Al-Baath Party amongst the Sunni circles from the 50s angered the Muslim Brothers and increased their grudge against the ruling regime. In addition to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the repercussions of the Iraqi-Iranian war (1980-1988), in the year 1984 Syria witnessed an internal crisis in the ruling body, which was the conflict between President Assad and his brother Rifaat. The events of the 80s led to the rise of the role of the security forces in the Syrian state and the transfer towards the security regime and to the leadership controlling all civil and military sectors, even the economic and financial resources of the country. Syria was affected by the war in Kuwait in 1990 and by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the supporter of Syria and the major source of its weaponry. The Syrian-Israeli conflict is considered one of the most dangerous events that tear the Middle East (Seale, 1992; Chouet, 1995; Deeb, 2015).

In 1972, under the patronage of Al-Baath Party, the 'Progressive National Front' was created. It included a group of founding parties: The Socialist Baath Party, The Arab Socialist Union Party, The Socialist Unionists Party, The Arab Socialists Movement, and The Syrian Communist Party (Kaddah, 1991; Ghalioun, 2002-2003). The National Front was extended and included a new group of parties and organisations including: The Democratic Socialist Party, The National Al-Ahd Movement, and The Syrian Pan-Arab Socialist Party<sup>24</sup>. This front is headed by a central leadership including the secretary generals of the parties. The number of the members of the Arab Socialist Baath Party is half + 1 of the seats of the Central Headquarters of the Front. The most prominent mission of this front is to establish unity, cooperation, and protecting the pan-Arab security. The

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24 The official website for the National Front, [http://www.pnf.org.sy/index.php?page=show\\_det&category\\_id=84&id=73&lang=ar&lang=ar](http://www.pnf.org.sy/index.php?page=show_det&category_id=84&id=73&lang=ar&lang=ar)  
Available on 26 August 2017.

priority used to be given to the members, and those who join Al-Baath Party; they had the priority in study and work.

There is another group of parties which participate in the political activities in Syria including: The Democratic National Solidarity Party, The National Youths for Justice and Development, and The Democratic Pioneer Party. It is prohibited to belong to a group of parties, the most known of which is The Muslim Brotherhood Party (Kaddah, 1991; Ghalioun, 2002-2003).

A set of economic, judicial, and social reforms and achievements were accomplished. The living circumstances got better in Damascus, the capital, which gained the biggest share out of the country's resources. However, corruption was spread among the elite benefitting from their position in the regime. According to Deeb, Assad the father, had a wish to reform, but the malfunction was due to either the choice of the plans and executive mechanisms or to the corruption of the men in power. After the first Gulf War, a number of opposition movements appeared, asking for reform. Politics-wise, Al-Baath regime accepted the presence of independent members representing a third of the Parliament members, and some economic reforms were also put in place (Bauchard, 2008; Deeb, 2015).

The Syrian economy from the 70s until 2000 was depending of several factors including: the oil revenues, the money transfer by Syrians living abroad, Arab and foreign countries' aids, drought seasons, the structure of industry and commerce, the authority of the regime, the corruption of the state bodies, the exploitation by people of their positions for increasing personal wealth, the ineffectiveness of jurisdiction in relation to protecting personal property and adjudication of investment cases. The most serious causes of the stumbling of the Syrian economy in the 80s and 90s are related to depriving Syria of the western and international economic support because of its stances against Israel; Syria came under economic embargo repeatedly and for a long time (Deeb, 2015).

The USA and the European countries often criticised Syria, considering it as a country embracing and sponsoring terrorism through supporting the Lebanese Hezbollah, the Palestinian Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and the Iraqi resistance. The Iranian-Syrian relation and the Russian-Syrian relation fed the international rejection of the policies of the ruling regime. Iran and Syria supervise arming Hezbollah and strengthening it quantitatively and qualitatively (Heydemann, 2000; Deeb, 2015).

### **- Syria at the Time of Bashar Al-Assad**

In July 2000 President Bashar Al-Assad came to power. He adopted a project which he called 'The track of advancing and modernising in all Syrian state institutions'. The phenomenon of cultural forums, which were seen as forums for free opinion, grew in number. Since then, the

dominance of the one party started fading; some landmarks of political and cultural freedom started appearing (Al-Hariri, 2013). Assad the son wanted to liberate the political and economic system and to consolidate democracy inside Syria, so the start of his rule came to be known as the ‘Spring of Damascus’. Many sectors of the Syrian society and intellectuals viewed Assad as having future ambitions capable of transferring Syria into the world of development and modernity. Assad cares a lot about the Syrian Informatics Society considered the most important centre for opening the country to the most advanced technologies in the electronic communication world (Ghalioun, 2002-2003; Troudi, 2006; Al-Daghidi, 2006).

Even lots of intellectuals, media people, artists, and opinion leaders in Syria and the Arab world – who later became opponents to Assad – confessed their optimism about the ability of this young president to change situations in Syria. However, the security and military policy followed to solve the Syrian crisis changed their view and stances.

The experience of ‘Damascus Spring’ stumbled for two reasons: the first is the contention regarding the methodology; Assad wanted it planned and gradual, whilst the opposition and the civil society wanted it a quick reform. The second reason was the foreign threats which accompanied this reformist experience. Many events pushed Syria to focus on consolidating its stability and defensive capability. Threats started since the end of the year 2000 when the second Palestinian Uprising broke out, to be followed by the ramifications of September 11<sup>th</sup> attack in 2001, in addition to the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. The assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Al-Hariri in 2005 affected Syria to a large extent and Syria had to withdraw from Lebanon. The economic and political embargo on Syria was tightened. Moreover, the war between Israel and Hezbollah broke out in 2006. The increase of foreign threats made continuing the process of liberalisation and reform characterised by hesitation, caution, and fear that Syria might lose its internal stability. After political prisoners were set free, and freedom was given to personalities belonging to many Islamic, liberal, and communist groups, the time of arrests and clamping down on the freedom of parties and media came back (Ghalioun, 2002-2003; Troudi, 2006; Balanche, 2006; Bauchard, 2008; Al-Hariri, 2013; Deeb, 2015).

In spite of pressures and embargo, Syria managed to reach self-sufficiency, regarding food provision, living requirements and power resources. This country has no external debts. The problem of city over-crowdedness was solved via the policy of balanced developing among the rural areas, cities, and the counties. An infrastructure network was launch all around Syria: airports; sea ports; dams; electricity; water, and communication networks. However, some villages still suffered absence of water pipes, and some others did not get electricity yet. The rapid increase of population creates numerous problems. The unemployment rate increased to 11.5% in the year 2005. The presence of the more than 1.5 million Iraqi refugees in Syria aggravated the



unemployment problem<sup>25</sup>. The individual income is still low and does not fulfil the aspirations of many Syrians (Balanche, B2006; Bauchard, 2008; Deeb 2015).

In order to achieve development and openness, Syria coordinated – on an economic level – with a group of Arab and non-Arab countries (Al-Hariri, 2013). Privatisation was allowed, especially in the communication sector. However, the first beneficiary of this openness was some relatives of Assad (Bauchard, 2008). The education sector witnessed a huge advancement since the time of Assad the father. Much farming lands were reclaimed and the industrial production grew bigger. However, the corruption spreading in the different sectors severely hinders the processes of developing and modernisation.

### **The Syrian Crisis within Its Contexts**

#### **● The events of Syria, a ring in a chain**

The Arab Spring, the Arab revolutions, the revolutions of the Arab Spring, were terms adopted by the media in describing protesting movements some of which were peaceful, the others were armed. They spread across a group of Arab countries. Their motives were similar due to the similarity of the situations and events the peoples of these countries lived. For long decades, the rulers and the kings have had hegemony over the reign subjugating the civilians to their will and command by all, direct and indirect, means. The spread of corruption hindered all the processes of development and progress. The gap between the rule and the people widened. The disappointment which resulted from the imposed censorship over all the sectors of life, especially the freedom of expression, led to the burst of the people's wrath.

Things started with the revolution in Tunisia from December 17<sup>th</sup>2010 to January 14<sup>th</sup>2011. It burst after Mohamed Bouazizi burned himself in protest against corruption, unemployment and poverty. It succeeded in overthrowing the previous Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and obliged him to run away from Tunisia. This event provoked many Arab countries peoples. The revolution in Egypt started on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The demonstrator protested against the spread of corruption, the bad living situation, and security and political tightening. This revolution resulted in the stepping down of the previous president Hosni Mubarak on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011. After Egypt, Libya witnessed a protesting movement which started in the middle of February and led to the murder of Muammar Gaddafi and the overthrow of his reign. This movement was characterized by using weapons as from its beginning. It was not as peaceful as the Egyptian revolution. The revolution in Yemen also started in February. A group of young people in Sana'a University demonstrated demanding the stepping down of the previous president Ali Abdullah Saleh. At that

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25 Syria received Palestinian refugees. The Lebanese fled to Syria during the course of the Israel-Lebanese war. Moreover, about a million and a half Iraqis took refuge in Syria following the American invasion of Iraq.

time, Saleh declared that he would not nominate himself for election again and that he would not hand power to his son. However, the demonstrations went on and many demonstrators were detained. This gave rise to the armed conflict in Yemen and a number of military personnel joined the revolution. In November 2011, the Gulf initiative was signed and, in accordance with its provisions, Saleh stepped down and handed power to the vice-president: Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi. The protests in Bahrain also started in February. The Bahraini government asked the help of the Cooperation Council of the States of the Gulf (GCC). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates sent soldiers to Bahrain in order to suppress the movements which were considered Shiite aiming to arouse *fitna* and seize power.

Some other Arab countries such as Jordan, Algeria, KSA, Sudan, Iraq, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco and Mauritania intermittently witnessed protests but they had no great effect.

On March 15<sup>th</sup> 2011, Syria witnessed the start of a protesting movement. Its organizers on Facebook announced the necessity for the opponents to gather in the quarters and streets of regions to raise their demands the most prominent of which were eliminating corruption and realizing reform. A forerunner of this start was a spontaneous unplanned protesting event in Al-Hareeqa area in Damascus. It started when a policeman humiliated a Syrian citizen. The Syrians angrily gathered and began cheering "the Syrian people can't be humiliated". Later, this slogan became one of the most significant slogans of the opponents'. As from the first days of the time when the opponents came out to streets, firing took place. The Syrian government charged "infiltrating people" of shooting the regime's forces and the civilians altogether in order to shake stability and sow hatred between the state and the people. However, the opponents charged the government forces themselves of being responsible for the brutal murder operations. The conflict quickly turned into an armed one. The two sides exchanged charges about committing massacre against the civilians. The Syrian security forces continually negated their responsibility for killing the peaceful demonstrators while the opposition insisted that the regime committed the most brutal and violent crimes against the unarmed people. The slogan of overthrowing the regime became the most repeatedly cheered slogan (Al-Baiyoomi, 2017; Janabi, 2016; Mokannawi, 2015; Harahsha, 2013; Shalash, 2013; Leila Vignal, 2012).

The data of the Syrian crisis are entangled and complex, the opinions of analyzers and interpreters strongly differ (Nasr et al, 2013). The interference of many Arab and non-Arab countries in the Syrian affairs made things more complicated. Who supports whom? Who finances whom? Why? What do the revolutionaries want? Islamization of Syria or freedom? Secularism or Islamic rule? Political dictatorship or suppression and religious *takfirism*? Is what is going on in Syria a people's revolution or a proxy war which is run by the benefited countries? The media – influenced by the attitudes of the countries towards the Syrian cause – depict different images about the events of Syria.

### ● The ethnic and religious diversity

In several research like (duMont, 2012) and even in many newspaper articles, the Syrian society is described as a 'mosaic' due to its ethnic, religious, and sectarian diversity. The term 'mosaic' indicates art and beauty, but was such diversity really bliss for the Syrian society? Could diversity without awareness feed advancement of peoples? Probably the most important question is: How was such diversity created?

We saw previously that Syria for a long time was occupied and governed by many peoples, eastern or western. Such peoples even fought against other peoples on the Syrian soil. This leads us to think of the volume of congestion and pressure accumulating, and possibly genetically or culturally inherited down to the current Syrian generation. How much freedom can be there under occupation or mandate? Was the Syrian people ready to exercise intellectual and political freedom following the end of the Ottoman occupation and French mandate? The number of the military coups, the huge schism among politicians and the mechanisms embodying such schism (assassinations, for example) may reveal how unready this people is for exercising a free and peaceful political activity.

Hafez Al-Assad, who belongs to the Alawite sect, was the first Alawite president to rule Syria. For centuries, Syria was ruled by the Sunni commerce bourgeois who were totally subject to the Ottoman rule (Chouet, 1995). The Alawite sect was persecuted and marginalised politically and socially. The sect was also excluded, geographically and administratively, from the centre and mechanism of power. Many other minorities suffered the same, but the volume of Alawite sufferings was bigger; their women used to be sold or hired by Sunni families, particularly the wealthy families, until the sixties of last century. The Alawites ran away to the mountains and lived where there were no health services. Poverty was their main trait (Chouet, 1995; Troudi, 2006). For the Sunnis and for the Twelve-Imams-Shia, the Alawites were viewed as the heretics of Islam; disbelievers, infidels, traitors, and apostates. They were recognised as a Shia Muslim sect after Hafez Al-Assad came to power (Chouet, 1995; Balanche, A, 2006).

The name 'Alawite' means the supporters or followers of *Imam Ali*, the cousin of the Prophet Mohammad. They are sometimes called *Nusayris*, after *Ibn Nusayr*; an Iraqi from Basra. His followers fled from Iraq and came mostly to Aleppo in Syria (Balanche, C, 2006; duMont, 2012). The Alawites are divided theologically into several groups, including: the *Haddadis* and *Khayyatis* (Chouet, 1995). Their religious reputation among the Sunni Sect is distorted due to not having mosques, not wearing veils (*hijab*) by their women, and permitting drinking alcohol (Balanche, A, 2006).

The persecution suffered by the Alawites forced them to keep their religious beliefs marked by secrecy and reservation. They even lodged to '*Taqiyah*' which means denying who they are sometimes and appearing in a way that suits and matches the trends of the dominant Sunni religion. In one of his legal opinions (Fatwas), Ibn Taymieh (the most prominent Sunni Muslim pundit)

stated that the Alawites are more infidel than Jews and Christians, and that war and Jihad (religious war) are religiously legal, even mandatory against the followers of this mystic course (Chouet, 1995; Balanche, A, 2006). A question that can be asked is: Can the followers of this religious leader – who legitimises killing all those who disagree with him in thinking, whether religious or political – spread a free culture and accept the culture of those who are at odds with them? Can their slogans calling for democracy be believed?

When the Muslim Brotherhood revolted against Al-Baath regime, their basic motive was not accepting the rule of the ‘non-believer apostate infidel minority’. They bombed, killed, and destroyed. They were severely clamped down security- and military-wise. Many of them were killed. In response to this suppression and to the secular movement, the number of mosques increased considerably, women stuck by the Islamic veil (*Hijab*), and many movements appeared wanting to redistribute the rule; the Sunni majority has the right to rule the state. The conflict between the ruling regime and the Muslim brotherhood reflects the conflict between the United States and Russia; the Muslim Brotherhood are known for their loyalty to Saudi Arabia, thus obedience to the United States, while the socialists are loyal to Russia (Corm, 1989; Troudi, 2006).

During the rule of Assad the father, Sunni adherent men took the highest positions, the most known of which were, Mustafa Tlas, Abdulhalim Khaddam, and Abdullah Al-Ahmar. However, the security sector was largely in Alawite hands (Chouet, 1995; Deeb, 2015).

### ● The obscurity of the Syrian identity

The term ‘Arab’ is used even in much research – to denote the majority of the Syrian society. The Syrians and Aramites are described as minorities, bearing in mind that they also speak Arabic and represent the origin of the Syrian people before Islam. This leads us to wonder: What is the foundation upon which this classification was done? If we assumed that the current Syrians and Aramites adhered to their belonging, to the original nationality, what would make the Syrian Arab in scientific descriptions? The use of Arabic which was imposed after the spread of Islam, or the politically imposed nationalism? According to item 10 in Al-Baath Party Constitution, an Arab is whoever speaks Arabic and lives on an Arab land or aspires to live in such countries, with conviction that he belongs to such nationalism. Al-Baath viewed Islam as a unifying factor amongst the Arab peoples (Troudi, 2006).

The on-going violence in Syria and applied by all parties might be the result of belonging contradictions. Relating religion to politics and relating nationalism to religion are disastrous in a society which was forced for many centuries to succumb to foreign invaders; a society that needs a convalescence until it constructs its identity or at least until it purges its identity, if it already exists.

Arabism is based on Islamism; Islam is determinist and fatalist (the word of God must be obeyed; the Quran). Islam is divided into so many sects and doctrines. The Sunni-Shia conflict is not a superficial conflict as portrayed by many who call for the necessity of the convergence of religions and doctrines. Accusing the other of unbelief is commonplace among the majority of the doctrines' adherents, thus legalising killing and blood shedding is not unexpected. Hence, we are experiencing a vortex of variables which encourage violence and schism, especially when politically employed, and this was what happened in Syria.

Al-Baath linked between Arabism, socialism, and secularism (Mehli, 2011), and tried to apply this approach in a society whose majority cannot apply critical thinking to the concepts in which they believe. The Sunni Muslims cannot suspect or even enquire about the credibility of the saying that 'the Quran is the speech of God', nor query the validity of the Hadith Shareef, registered sayings by the Prophet Mohammad (The Prophet Traditions). Even beyond that, many deny science when it contradicts a religious text, and permit punishing all those who regress from Islam, as did the first caliphate Abu Bakr when he launched wars against the apostates. The religious dictatorship prevailed for many centuries, supported by the political dictatorship. Both robbed the citizen of the right to think and the right to criticise, thus the right to know.

Awareness should also be raised about the role of illiteracy in increasing the amount of fanaticism of all its aspects, tribal, religious and political. In the modern days the number of schools and universities increased, but the centuries-long-rooted beliefs still dominate that thinking of many sectors of the Syrian society. The cleric is viewed as the most important 'ideological' reference for those adhering to their doctrines. In addition to the intolerance of the cleric, his low academic and cultural degree is enough to create a *takfiri* (labelling as infidel whoever disagrees with one's opinion) society, shaken from within.

### ● Denying the other; the dominant policy

This policy is not the product of the modern era; rather it is an accumulated heritage. A lot of historical events prove this, like the Islamic-Islamic conflict and the ideological conflict following independence from France, in addition to the actions and reactions of the sectors of the Syrian people towards those who oppose their views (in the context of the studied crisis). Dialogue needs understanding and accepting the other. However, what happened in Syria may be attributed in the first place to the culture of imposition and coercion. Analysing the rhetoric of the Syrians and their stances towards each other on the social media websites proves the dominance of the culture of "radically denying the other". The most serious tool for this culture is demonising the opponent and presenting him as an internal enemy.

### ● **Dividing the Syrian society into proponents and opponents to the policy of the two Assads**

The difference regarding opinions is centred around several major ideas. For the proponents, Assad the father managed to establish political stability in Syria following the time when chaos prevailed. He introduced many reforms and gave lands to the farmers after feudalism controlled everything. He improved the industrial and agricultural sectors; he led Syria towards self-sufficiency; he reconstructed the Syrian army and could win over Israel (regaining honour following the defeat in the 1967 war). He protected Syria from a sectarianism-based civil war. Thanks to the Syrian support, the Lebanese resistance (Hezbollah) realized victories over Israel. The two Assads support the Palestinian resistance and allow the Palestinian organisations to resume their activities over the Syrian land. Assad the father, and later on the son, continuously sought to create a real Arab unity that constitutes a force able to deter all colonisation attempts. Syria is facing a major conspiracy because of its stances against Israel and the United States and because of its adherence to pan Arab nationalism. What is happening in Syria is not a revolutionary public movement; rather it is an American plot aiming at handing over the rule in Syria to the Muslim Brotherhood in order to break this country up on religious and sectarian bases, considering the policy of the Muslim Brotherhood is a *takfiri* policy that views minorities as infidel groups that should declare repentance and embrace the religion of the right path (Islam). The security and military grip in the country was and still is important because of the presence of the Israeli enemy (Ababsa, 2005; Troudi, 2006; Isaac, 2014). The opponents to the regime reject the theoretical foundations of the proponents, thinking that the two Assads contributed to shaking the stability of Syria and they supported the Zionist enemy. Reform is a lie and supporting the resistance is a mask for covering alliance with Israel and the United States. The two Assads exercised absolute dictatorship over the people.

### ● **Some data about the opposition**

The Syrian political opposition – represented by the Syrian National Council, the National Coalition for Syrian Opposition and Revolution Forces, Syrian Revolution General Commission, the Stream of Building the Syrian State, and the pro-government opposition–could not get unified for long years in spite of "the international efforts" which tried to make the opposition go hand in hand. These leaders come from different ideological origins and doctrines. They live in a confidence crisis among each other. Their views about the decisions that should be made vary severely. They disagree about the resources and about distributing them among each other. And what is more important is their tendency to access governance or get a high rank. The missing command of the opposition made the protesting movement demagogic, anarchic and lacking a clear vision. The communication between the leaders and the demonstrators was utterly missing. Some of the leaders called for foreign interference in Syria and announced their disappointment because the countries did not take this step. For the opponents of the western policies in the Arab homeland, this was a stigma. The opposition seemed as a traitor of the national principles. The

conflict and the competition among the regional supporters, such as KSA and Qatar, also contributed to the failure of the process of collaboration among the Syrian opposition leaders (Mahmoud, 2013; The Middle East, 2013; Sayegh, 2013).

The armed opposition started as combatant groups spreading in various areas of Syria which called themselves "the Free Army" and got recognized and supported by many countries. According to the military command of the Free, the officers and soldiers who defected from the government Syrian army form the core of the Free Army<sup>26</sup>. However, the Syrian government disproves these allegations and says that some defectors are only pretexts to cover the conspirators who send soldiers to fight the Syrian army<sup>27</sup>.

Marwan Qabalan (2013) sees that the map of the formations of the armed military opposition were not clear in 2011 and 2012; these formations lack the coherent structure and a central authority which is able to unify them. All of them have one clear aim which is the elimination of the ruling regime. However, their vision is blurred and their strategies are conflicting. They disagree about anything else other than the goal. Their main disagreement is about the identity and the political system of the future Syrian state.

Qabalan divided these formations into two main streams: the first is a stream with a secular tendency. This formation is often connected to and falls under the Free Army. The second comprises the battalions and brigades with Islamic trends, whether they are combatants from Syria or foreign ones. As to 2012, this formation contained 600 factions. The illiterate groups form the largest part of the leaders of this stream.

According to Qabalan, these formations were originally formed spontaneously; they began as a reaction against the practices of the government forces against the people. He also sees that the regime was the only winner of the militarization of the revolution so as to justify its aggressive acts. Nevertheless, the supporters of the regime – from all the people's and elite slices – see that the armed opposition was formed as a part of a bigger conspiracy plotted by many countries. Some military formations were formed and trained during the events and others were ready and prepared before the wave of the Arab protests<sup>28</sup>.

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26 Al-Jazeera channel, "Free Syrian Army", 02 November 2014. Available: 25 April 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/military/2014/11/2/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1>

BBC Arabic, "Free Syrian Army", 17 November 2011. Available: 29 April 2018. [http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/11/111116\\_syrian\\_free\\_army\\_qa](http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/11/111116_syrian_free_army_qa)

27 Al-Alam Channel, "The truth and identity of the Free Army", 10 August 2012. Available: 29 March 2013. <http://www.alalam.ir/news/1246804/%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%87>

Sama Channel, "A Game That Continues", 03 September 2014. Available: 29 April 2018. [http://www.sama-tv.net/index.php?id=1593\\_Sama\\_Channel](http://www.sama-tv.net/index.php?id=1593_Sama_Channel)

28 Al Mayadeen Channel, "Western Writers Explain the Conspiracy against Syria", 20 September 2017. Available: 29 April 2018. <http://www.almayadeen.net/episodes/825067/%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%A9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%85-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7>

Hereunder, I list some of the "secular" militant formations: The Temporary Military Council of the Free Syrian Army, The Supreme Military Council of the Free Syrian Army, the Joint Military Command of the Syrian Revolution, the Syrian National Army, the Joint Command of the Syrian Military Councils, the Supreme Joint Military Command Council.

Some of the features of this stream are as follows: a lot of its leaders run things from abroad, especially Turkey. It does not have the tools of communication with the people. In addition, it does not promote ideas well. It is in a state of conflict and a lack of co-ordination with and confidence in the political opposition. The military command is divided and dispersed as the visions are divergent and even blurred. This command desires to gain power on bases of the right to lead and of the precedence of defection. Some of them argued that it is necessary to stick to military hierarchy. In addition, the most prominent reason for disagreement is obeying different financing actors. The leaders more or less united when they saw that their disagreement was the reason behind the progress of the government forces. The Joint Command of the Revolution Military Councils realized progress because of the blessing of some important and effective religious figures (Qabalan, 2013) <sup>29</sup>.

As for the formations with Islamist tendency, the demonstrators adopted a sectarian discourse as at the start of the protests. Some countries supported the Sunni Islamist tendency and the internal sectarian divisions in Syria which reinforced the Islamization of the revolution. Many forces and streams adopt the political Islam – especially the Sunni – in facing the regime (Qabalan, 2013).

The Most Significant and Effective Islamic Forces on the Syrian Arena Are:

1- **Jabhat Al-Nusra**. It advocates Jihad and sees that the overthrow of Al-Assad is the first step towards an Islamic state. It adopts extremist and offensive discourse and behavior towards the religious minorities. It considers itself the first defender of the Sunni sect against those whom it calls "Al-Nusairiyyeen" instead of Alawites, and those whom it calls "rawafed" instead of Shiites. Many of its members are experts in fighting due to their participation in what they call "Jihad arenas" in many countries some of which are Iraq and Afghanistan. It also contains many nationalities. One of the most important reasons why it appeals to the Syrians is that its external financing is very strong. This organization declared its loyalty to Al-Qaeda under the command of Aymen Al-Dhawahiri. Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the leader of Al-Qaeda branch in Iraq, declared integrating his organization to Al-Nusra and announced the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Jabhat Al-Nusra depends on suicide bomber attacks. Its informational strategy is identical to that of Al-Qaeda.

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29 Al-Jazeera, The Armed Opposition in Syria, 05 September 2013. Available on 20 May 2018.

<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2013/9/5/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7>



2- **The Syrian Islamic Front** includes a group of brigades and battalions some of which are: The Battalions of Ahrar Al-Sham, Al-Haq Brigade in Homs, Atbaa Al-Rasoul, Al-Fath Al-Mubeen and Islamic Al-Fajr Movement in Aleppo and its suburbs. Most of these groups belong to the salafi – fundamental – stream. They advocate Jihad in the cause of building an Islamic state against the Iranian and Safawi invasion which aims at establishing a Shiite state that includes Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. One of the principles of these combatants is that the agreements between them and other countries should not contradict Islamic Sharia; Islam shall be the compasses of any action and reaction.

3- **The Caucus of Ansar Al-Sham** consists of a number of battalions and brigades distributed among several areas. Each faction is responsible for a specific area. Some of them are: Al-Sahaba Battalions, Ahfad Al-Rasoul Brigade, Al-Furqan Battalions, Islam Brigade and Al-Habib Al-Mustafa Brigade.

4- **Syrian Islamic Liberation Front.** The most prominent characteristic of this front is its conflict even against the Sunni sect. It calls some individuals "the sick brothers" who need to be guided and forced to practice the religious obligations so that they may get the satisfaction and blessings of Allah (Qabalan, 2013) <sup>30</sup>.

Koran and Sunna are the reference sources for all the factions of the Islamic stream. However, the armed forces do not have a united political or military body. Intellectual differences dominate them. Some of them adopt international *Jihadi* thought similar to that of Al-Qaeda. Some of them have moderate Islamic discourse while the majority categorize themselves in the field of *salafi* thought or fundamentalism. The interface among them is that they fight a "disbelieving regime" (Qabalan, 2013).

Bloody conflicts prevail among the factions. These conflicts reach the degree of assassinating the most important leaders. For example, the flaming conflict between Jabhat Al-Nusra and Al-Farouq Battalion. The relation of this stream with the political opposition is weak. Jabhat Al-Nusra refuses to work with the political opposition considering it as a western project which aims to encircle the Islamic project (Qabalan, 2013).

The Islamic armed stream is characterized by the ability to influence people because of the factors it has: the enticing religious discourse, the robust financing, the active relief networks

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30 Al-Masdar Site, All That You Want to Know about Jabhat Al-Nusra, 25 September 2013. Available: 26 April 2018. <https://www.al-masdar.net/%D9%83%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%AA%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9/>

Al-Jazeera, Seven Syrian Factions Merge with The "Islamic Front", 22 November 2013. <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2013/11/22/%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%AC-%D8%A8%D9%80-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9>

which are supported by large material resources, the broad social relations, and the power of media (Qabalan, 2013).

### **Summary**

The ethnic and religious diversity in Syria is the result of wars and conflicts. The fighting among Muslims is for the purpose of holding the rule and imposing religious visions, interpretations and applications that suit their inclinations. The Syriacs are treated as an accepted minority among the majority, although they are the original inhabitants of Syria. The historical heritage of the Syrian Armenians is full of sadness; they came to Syria following the massacres perpetrated by the Ottoman State against them. The same applies to the Kurds who came to Syria because of the Turkish oppression. A group of achievements and reforms were carried out, but corruption is still widespread in most working sectors in Syria. In the light of such information, the events of the Syrian crisis, being studied, are going on.

## **An Overview on Al-Jazeera**

### **The Context in which Al-Jazeera Took Place**

A channel created by the Emir of Qatar Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani gaining power in 1995 by a coup against his father (el Oifi, 2004). The advent of Al-Jazeera was in 1996. Its name means "the peninsula" (Huyghe 2). The Qatari government has allocated 150 million US dollars as a loan. It is an amount helping the channel in the first five years of broadcasting, then Al-Jazeera must achieve self-financing by advertising or by its media products (Sayed Ahmed, 2013).

The emergence and success of Al-Jazeera were accompanied by the public disinterestedness in the programs produced by the national media that glorify emirs, kings and presidents. These media get away from communities' concerns.

In 2002, Al-Jazeera congratulated itself for having a public base of 35 million viewers in the Arab world. According to Jassem Al-Ali, director of the channel, there are 200,000 subscribers in the United States and Canada and the number increases 2500 per week. Many public places, such as London restaurants, install satellite antennas to allow visitors to follow Al-Jazeera (Miladi, 2005).

The Qatari government was suffering from a bias applied by the Arab media. For example, in a confrontation, Saudi Arabia succeeded, thanks to the media support, to invade a border gendarmerie of Qatar; the media legitimized Saudi actions.

The genesis of this television responds to the internal circumstances of Qatar and to the problems this country faces in its regional environment, particularly its relations with Saudi Arabia. After the 1991 war, the Gulf Emirates found out their fragilities and their structural weaknesses. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has raised fears among the Qataris, fear of having the same fate; it is possible that Saudi Arabia invades their territory. Reason why Qatar had to seek a protector, the alliance with the United States was the choice (el Oifi, 2004). Qatar aims to be the best ally of the United States that is why it opens its territories by welcoming American troops who left their Saudi bases (Huyghe 2). The Qatari-American relationship is getting stronger. The US military has set up a general command near Doha. In this context it is not easy to understand neither the identity of Al-Jazeera nor its functioning (el Oifi, 2004).

Saudi Arabia is a powerful competitor of Qatar. The two countries are trying to capture transnational feelings. Both countries seek American support and benevolence (el Oifi, 2004).

The Saudi leaders have one objective: to control the Arab media sector; they must dominate the informational machine. A goal born in the 1950s and 1960s, during Nasser's propaganda period. This president aimed at the unification of the Arab countries. At that time the Arab nationalism could create internal struggles between supporters and protesters. Saudi Arabia applied a monopoly on all types of media; newspapers, televisions and radios. It bought and created Arabic-

language media. It aimed at the formation of public opinion and the avoidance of any criticism addressed to the kingdom and especially to the royal family (el OiFi, 2004).

Following the appearance of Al-Jazeera and its editorial policies, the Saudi media strategy was broken. The space of the Arabic-speaking media is shaken by the Qatari options. Distinguishing itself from the Saudi media strategy is a priority for Al-Jazeera. To differentiate itself, the channel focuses on three axes: the location, the choice of personnel and the reference ideology. It was necessary to find a new strategy to change the Arab communication landscape at all levels. Al-Jazeera did not hesitate to clarify the impasses and the ineffectiveness of the Saudi media (el OiFi, 2004).

Following the influence of Al-Jazeera on the Arab opinion and to enter into a competition with it, American politicians have launched Arabic-speaking televisions and radios such as Radio Sawa and New Iraq TV (Miladi, 2005).

### **Personnel**

Al-Jazeera Chairman of the Board is Hamad Ben Thamer Al-Thani, a relative of the royal family. The journalists of the channel are of different Arab origins. The pre-eminence of Lebanese journalists seen in the Saudi field is over. The Saudi media were based on an alliance between Saudi money and Lebanese know-how, whilst Al-Jazeera adopts the pan-Arabism to recruit staff. Its strategy is to stay far of the Saudi orientations. By the journalists of Al-Jazeera, the different Arab nationalities are represented; the Saudi and Lebanese dominance is over (Sayed Ahmed, 2013; Miladi, 2005).

Al-Jazeera's core staff had the experience of the BBC channel. In 1994, by a contract, the group of a private Saudi television (Orbit) took advantage of the know-how and international reputation of BBC television to create a new Arabic-language channel. This channel was to broadcast in one and a half year, but the contract was cancelled because of a misunderstanding regarding the editorial line of this new television. However, Al-Jazeera officials used this cancellation of the contract and recruited the most famous journalists such as the Syrian Faisal Al-Qassem, the Jordanian Sami Hadad and Jamil Azer or the Tunisian Mohammed Krichen. These journalists restore the professionalism, rigor and experiences of the BBC at the same time they maintain an Arab ambience (el OiFi, 2004; Miladi, 2005).

### **Al-Jazeera Strategies**

The emergence of Al-Jazeera in a small country highlights the need of Qatar to achieve democratic change and to face the challenges. Qatar began to live in a democratic and pluralistic atmosphere. Al-Jazeera became the symbol of the Gulf States; an island of freedom surrounded by censored media (Miladi, 2005).

The channel has assigned itself a major objective: to support the Palestinians, particularly during the *Intifada*. Its relations with Qatar's foreign policy remain vague, reason why some people call Al-Jazeera an alibi of the Qatari regime; a means by which the Qatari government indirectly passes its ideas. The Foreign Minister Hamad Bin-Jassim Al-Thani confirms that Al-Jazeera is an independent media, particularly in terms of its editorial policy (el OiFi, 2004; Miladi, 2005).

The channel is considered as a bearer of the Qatari official ambition to become a mediator of regional debates. Al-Jazeera highlights Qatar's mediation to improve the relations between several Arab countries like Sudan, Yemen and Iran. When the will of the Jordanians was to bring the leaders of Hamas out of their territory, Qatar opened the door and welcomed them. In order to prove its capacity as a mediator between civilizations, in April 2003, Qatar organized a conference in which Muslim and Christian students from different origins took part (Miladi, 2005).

In the Arab world, there are three levels of information flows: international level, Arabic-speaking foreign media broadcast to the Arab territories, particularly the BBC and CNN. National level, represented by the state media which aim at the legitimization of the policies of the regimes. The third level is pan-Arab or transnational, represented by media attempting to overcome national cleavages and obstacles. The goal of these media is the Arab viewer. Al-Jazeera may present the third level (el OiFi, 2004; Miladi, 2005, Al-Ghadban, 2010).

The attention is increased on these pan-Arab media whose unusual interpretations of the facts are observed. These channels attempt to mirror the ideologies that are spread among the populations and to reflect the public preferences. Before the launch of Al-Jazeera, the Arab world was not witness of a free media space; it was the Arab media located abroad that relatively represented the informational liberalization. After the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon in 1975, a part of the Lebanese press was migrated to Europe. The Saudi media were based in London or Italy. The Arab capital that was invested abroad confirmed the impossibility of building a media field characterized by a real liberation within the Arab world. The creation of Al-Jazeera was in a context in which Lebanese journalists became servants of the Saudi princes whose media empire was set up outside (in Europe) without taking ethical considerations into account. Al-Jazeera aims at demonstrating the ability to have a free Arab media at all levels. Gradually, the Saudi media installed in the West returned to Arab territory, especially to the United Arab Emirates, but not to Saudi Arabia (el OiFi, 2004).

The launch of Al-Jazeera was accompanied by the abolition of the Qatari Ministry of Information. This gave the people an impression that they had a gift that would open the door to free and pluralistic information. This information is distinguished by the fact that it is produced in Arabic, by Arab staff and ultimately it is for the profits of the Arab populations (el OiFi, 2004, Al-Ghadban, 2010).

Al-Jazeera emerged in an unstable geopolitical context, the notion of Nation-State was contested and the power of transnational identifications was remarkable. The channel faced the accusations of the Arab nationalists. According to them, Al-Jazeera is a sign of the weakness of the Arab nation. In order to legitimize the existence of Al-Jazeera, Qatar aimed at capturing transnational, pan-Arab and pan-Islamic feelings, with the aim of instrumentalising them in legitimating a disputed national identity (el OiFi, 2004, Al-Ghadban, 2010).

Al-Jazeera journalists congratulate themselves on their premises and proudly write: "The whole world looks at CNN and CNN looks at Al-Jazeera!" (Huyghe 2).

During the first Gulf War, America propagated its images via CNN with no fear of competition. It chose carefully its information frames; its images were chosen according to its propaganda. Because of Al-Jazeera, the American monopoly of images has been lost as there is an Arab look at the world; the interpretations of events are no longer subjected to mono-sense. This created a geopolitical battle of information. By covering the movements in Iraq, Al-Jazeera has established a communication counterbalance that managed to cope with US military superiority (Huyghe 2; el OiFi, 2004). At a time when a large majority of televisions were adhering to the new prohibitions such as the prohibition to show dead bodies, Al-Jazeera continued to expose another vision of war (Huyghe 2). Al-Jazeera changed the functioning of the Arab media, but also prompted the Western media to question their conventional norms regarding the coverage of the wars and conflicts (Miladi, 2005).

Through its programs, which are different from the broadcasts of state-owned television stations whose audiences are bored, Al-Jazeera quickly became a symbol of liberalization of the Arab media discourse. It abandoned the propaganda of the Arab regimes and opened the doors to the criticisms of the situations that worry the different Arab communities. The success of Al-Jazeera is the result of the mixture of three visions: Arabism, Islamism and liberalism (el OiFi, 2004). In its shows, the trends Arab, Islamic and liberal are mixed. In many programs, speakers having nationalist visions are regularly invited. The adopted slogans refer to the nation and Pan-Arab solidarity. The struggles against the Colonialism and Zionism are also represented by the images that Al-Jazeera evokes (el OiFi, 2004; Huyghe 2, Al-Ghadban, 2010).

The weekly program "Opposite Direction" may present the nationalistic trend of the channel. Programs like "Sharia and Life" are the mirror of Islamic sensitivity. Youssef Al-Qaradawi is frequently invited on Al-Jazeera. The program "Several Opinions" reflects the liberal sense of the channel. This program is the space of very divergent personalities -politically and ideologically. It is also possible to see Israeli officials or supporters of Zionist and American policies. They are invited to face the Arab interlocutors. For the first time in the Arab media landscape, Israeli leaders or journalists can be listened by the Arab peoples. The success of Al-Jazeera is a result of the mixture of these three sensitivities (el OiFi, 2004; Huyghe 2, Al-Ghadban, 2010).

Before 11 September 2001, Al-Jazeera was an elite channel (Miladi, 2005). The remarkable increase in Al-Jazeera's visibility, both regionally and internationally, is due to its exploitation of the crises experienced in the Middle East. The role of this channel in the orientation and formation of public opinion cannot be negligible (el OiFi, 2004). Its acknowledged credibility and popularity are the results of its coverage of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq in a way different from that of American media (Miladi, 2005).

Al-Jazeera has gained the confidence of private sponsors. Many brands regularly appear: DHL, Sony, Western Union, National Bank of Qatar, Qatar Petroleum, Islamic Bank of Qatar, Gas of Qatar and others. Advertising is a very important financial source for Al-Jazeera. To attract sponsors, the channel has had to prove its ability to obtain a strong popular acceptance (Miladi, 2005).

### **Programming**

The slogan of Al-Jazeera is "Opinion and its Opposite". It is considered the first Arab information channel. Its programs consist of: regional and international information followed by analysis of specialists, debates and discussions on different events, information on the economy and sports, documentaries and educational shows. The channel presents itself as an independent and international media, competitor of the strongest media like BBC and CNN (Baghdadi 2, 2009).

On Al-Jazeera, a phenomenon which is not usual on the Arab waves occurred. The Arab regimes can be criticized by the opponents. The channel constantly evokes the impotency of the Arab world and the weaknesses of the regimes that are not able to overcome the challenges. Al-Jazeera was able to invent a new identity for the Arab media while covering tortured prisoners in Palestine or Iraq, civilian victims, grieving women and Arab popular anger (Huyghe 2).

Many Shows allow viewers to speak live over the telephone. The program "Al-Jazeera Pulpit" is considered very important. A program animated by several journalists in which Arab audiences can demonstrate their frustrations, anger and emotions with regard to the case in Palestine. Through broadcasting images of material damage and killed people, Al-Jazeera opened the opportunity of calling for fund-raising for the coalition of Arab and Muslim charities "Union for Good" aiming at the benefit of the Palestinian population.

Al-Jazeera offers the sphere to witnesses who tell about the Israeli atrocities and the blocked people in Jenin, Ramallah and Nablus. The audiences express the difficulties they suffer from. The channel also announces the dates of the gatherings organized in different places.

In April 2002, through the program Al-Jazeera Pulpit, Arab children from several countries could show their feelings and send messages of support to Palestinian children. According to Mohammed Krichen, producer and presenter of "Under Siege":

*There was a state of revolt in the Arab streets following the events of Jenin, we wanted to exploit this frustration and propose an outlet for Arab public opinion to be able to express. From the outset, we did not wish to have editorial control over the content; we wanted to let the public react spontaneously and freely* (Miladi, 2005).

The channel is recognized by its broadcasting of the recordings (video or audio cassettes) of Al-Qaeda and its leader. The American authorities see that Bin Laden profited from his appearances on the screen of Al-Jazeera; he gave secret instructions to his supporters (Huyghe2; Sayed Ahmed, 2013).

At a time when the appearance of moderate or radical Islamic groups was completely censored on the media in the region, Al-Jazeera was Osama Bin Laden's letterbox. This transmission has multiplied the popularity of Al-Qaeda but also the popularity of the channel in the Arab world and in the diaspora. The deployment of the Internet has facilitated the propaganda of terrorist groups; Al-Jazeera is no longer the only space in which the actions of Al-Qaeda are seen. By using digital means and new communication technologies, Al-Qaeda no longer needs to disturb itself by convincing mass media to issue its press releases. Terrorism has its own media (Miladi, 2005; Huyghe 2).

Some journalists have resigned, such as Hafez Al-Mirazi; Head of the Washington office. For him, the channel witnesses a dramatic editorial change favourable to the Islamic, this was seen in the columns of the daily Al-Hayat whose journalist chooses Figures presenting the Islamist hard-line. The divergence within the editorial team of Al-Jazeera caused a drift of the editorial line towards a strong appearance of the Islamists. Banalizing violence even distort the reality are results of this media change (Ferjanie, 2008).

The impotency of the international media to achieve an unbiased coverage of events, such as the Israeli-Palestinian war, has helped Al-Jazeera to advance its atypical methodology. Al-Jazeera did not hesitate to issue images that western channels like CNN and BBC had refused to broadcast (Miladi, 2005).

During the American fight against the Taliban, Al-Jazeera was the only television allowed to cover in Afghanistan. Al-Jazeera's presence was remarkable thanks to its cameras filming on the ground. Its reports revealed other informative frameworks than those chosen for the benefit of the American propaganda. The channel showed the catastrophic outcomes of the war. That is to say, the sides that America tried to hide were presented on Al-Jazeera. The reports tried to prove that the missiles do not avoid women and children to only strike bearded men that are head cutters. Al-Jazeera attempted to create emotions favourable to the victims. The influences of this representation of the dramatic consequences are multiplied when the viewer and victims have the same beliefs, the same customs and the same sufferings (el OiFi, 2004; Huyghe 2).



Al-Jazeera succeeded in facilitating pan-Arab dialogue and in addressing issues that directly affect the interests of the communities in the region. The regimes' control over media content is torn, and the foreign policies of these regimes can be tackled by the transnational channels, especially by Al-Jazeera.

In 1998, the coverage of the American strikes against Iraq enriched Al-Jazeera's distinctiveness and eventually the size of its audience increased. For the first time, viewers in the region saw an Arab television that could interpret events other than the national media that downplayed the facts.

By covering the war in Iraq, Al-Jazeera tried to achieve a balance. It gave the floor to the members of the government or to the Iraqi leaders but also to the Americans; its correspondents accompanied the American army (el OiFi, 2004; Miladi, 2005).

The coverage of the second Palestinian Intifada and the Israeli repression without reservations, demonstrated the Arabian face of the channel. The live information was multiplied. Interviews with leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad played the role of legitimizing Islamic movements in Palestine; the Arab public opinion retained a favourable image. Al-Jazeera correspondents in the occupied territories and in Israel, Walid Al-Omari, Chirin Abu Aqila, and Javara Al-Boudyri, became stars (el OiFi, 2004). Through its coverage of the second Palestinian Intifada and its pluralistic broadcasts, Al-Jazeera was able to win a large Arabic-speaking audience. Thirty-five million viewers in the Arab world but also a considerable audience outside. Al-Jazeera is considered a credible source for millions of viewers. Several events would show the influence of this television on the public opinion. For example, when Saddam Hussein's sons were killed by the Americans, it was necessary to expose their corpses on Al-Jazeera's screen. This exhibition could quiet the pretensions that consider the killing a fabricated affair (Huyghe 2).

Several programs are spaces of confrontation of conflicting and widely divergent opinions. One of these broadcasts is the program "The Opposite Direction" or "The Opposite Sense". It is inspired by the American program "Crossfire" (Huyghe 2).

Through the selectivity of words, the channel draws the mental images which reshape the facts. Al-Jazeera maintains a balance in terms of information framing, but the choice of vocabularies demonstrates its attitudes. For example, it called the Anglo-American coalition "Invasion Forces". The perception of the war in the Arab world is directly influenced by the words used in media. The Americans presented the war as a "Liberation of the People", however, Al-Jazeera presented it as an "Occupation of an Arab country" (el OiFi, 2004).

### **Encountered Obstacles**

Since the Americans consider Al-Jazeera to be the Channel of Bin Laden, the offices of this media were bombed in Kabul but also in Baghdad and Fallujah in 2003 (Huyghe 2).

Al-Jazeera was exposed to pressures of Arab politicians and Western powers due to its coverage of war events. It was required to keep a discourse ensuring public calm and not to incite the spirit

negatively (Miladi, 2005). The United States, through the voices of Powell, Rumsfeld or Armitage, opposed Al-Jazeera's information and pressurized the Emirate of Qatar (Huyghe 2). Tayssir Allouni, one of the channel presenters, was arrested in Spain following accusations of having links with Al-Qaeda (Huyghe 2).

Al-Jazeera met the dissatisfaction of the Arab regimes (Baghdadi 2, 2009). In June 2004, the offices of Al-Jazeera were closed by the new Iraqi authorities. Other closures have occurred in Jordan and Kuwait due to several complaints that have been filed by Arab governments (Huyghe 2). Jordan closed the channel's office for four months for the reason that the journalist treated badly the personality of the king. In Algeria, the electricity was purposely cut off to prevent the receiving of a program broadcasted by Al-Jazeera. This program was devoted to the Algerian civil war as well as to the role played by the army in this war. Egypt accused the channel of applying incitement to religious and doctrinal hatred, which is why Al-Jazeera journalists were followed by the authority (Baghdadi 2, 2009).

Some of Al-Jazeera journalists died while covering wars, such as Jordanian journalist Tarek Ayoub who was hit almost directly by an American missile in Iraq.

Despite the US pressure and the requirements of the Iraqi interim authority addressed to Qatar, the channel retained its methodology in regards to the coverage of the war (el OiFi, 2004).

### **Criticisms**

The opinions are divided regarding the purpose of Al-Jazeera and its affiliation. It is possible that the Americans tried to liberalize the Arab media in order to obtain political moderation. Al-Jazeera's slogan "Opinion and its Opposite" and the diversity of opinions on each treated subject may reflect this trend of liberalism. But the fact that Al-Jazeera criticizes the Washington policy applied in the region makes the entire media policy of the channel a thought contestable by the American Administration. Despite the known dominance of the United States over Qatar, the creation of Al-Jazeera may not be dogmatically exogenous. The coverage of the war in Iraq could confirm the independence of the channel whose the content of messages was contradictory to the official attitudes of the Qatari government that welcomed the American troops on its territory. However, Al-Jazeera is criticized to be a device working for the benefit of the American Administration, both to calm down the erupting anger of the Arab people because of the American hegemony, and to legitimize the installation of the American troops in region (el OiFi, 2004).

The channel was accused of being a means used by the Americans to tremble the Arab world and to control the territory and wealth of the region. Al-Jazeera propagates the American project and propaganda in the Arab world (el OiFi, 2004; Miladi, 2005). Some see it as an associate of the Taliban television. However, others see it as CNN television but in Arabic. Western governments demonized Al-Jazeera by considering it the channel of Al-Qaeda propaganda that increased the

popularity of terrorists (Miladi, 2005, Sayed Ahmed, 2013). Since it covered the war in Iraq, in a manner contrary to the Western propaganda, it was accused of being financed by Saddam Hussein. As it gives the floor to Israeli leaders, it is accused of being supported by Mossad funds. By addressing problems of US, Al-Jazeera is estimated to be funded by the CIA (Miladi, 2005).

For some, this channel was created with the aim of normalizing the Arab relations with Israel, and also it was built under Jewish supervision. Through its screen, it is possible to see foreign leaders who apply the marketing of their options. Israeli leaders defend their stances, this has made the Arab acceptance of Israeli opinions easier (Sayed Ahmed, 2013). (Before the existence of Al-Jazeera, it was impossible to accept listening to the opinions of an Israeli). In 31 March 2013, Mossad's former president, Shabtai Shavit, said in a statement in the Israeli daily Yedeoute Ahranoute that Qatar has played a historic role in favor of Israel, this country is considered an active arm of the American and Israeli policy in the Middle East and the Arab region (Sayed Ahmed, 2013).

One of the arguments of the opponents of Al-Jazeera is that this channel confirms the American pretensions. The channel tries to link and confuse the terrorist operations with the Arabs and Muslims. It propagates the ideology of the Arab Resistance which is led by terrorist and extremist forces; it covers and legitimizes all operations. Al-Jazeera broadcasts recordings that show the killing and the kidnapped people. It spreads the terror that terrorist groups are aiming at. Sometimes, it gives the scope to extremist Islamists breaking the laws of their countries. However, it neglects the figures having projects favourable to nationalism and aimed at the development of the Arab countries (Sayed Ahmed, 2013).

In the West, the channel also met with criticism. The United States and Britain did not accept Al-Jazeera's method of covering the war in Iraq because it distorted the image of the Western liberators (Baghdadi 2, 2009).

### **Criticism of the Channel's Programs**

The program "Opposite Direction" aims at putting in front of the viewer several opinions on the same dealt issue. The Syrian presenter Faysal Al-Qassem guides the dialogue in a theatrical way, creating by his noisy interventions a mental disturbance in the mind of receiver. At the end of this show, the viewers become stricter and too attached to their ideas; the tolerance is lost.

The program "More Than One Opinion" in which the journalist Sami Haddad interrupts the discussions of the guests in order to demonstrate his own opinions. He also comes out of the main treated axis to address secondary subjects which clearly spoils the debates.

Through the "Without Limits" and "Witness of the Era" programs, the Egyptian journalist, Ahmad Mansour invites well-known personalities to criticize regimes or ideologies that do not suit

the guests' trends and those adopted by the leaders of the channel. The guests often support the Islamic leadership and represent the thoughts of Muslim Brothers (Al-Ghadban, 2010).

The independence of Al-Jazeera is criticized because of its submission to the constraints of the policy of Qatar (Miladi, 2005). Mohamed Kreshan, a journalist working for Al-Jazeera, says in his book "Arab satellites and the questions of the nation" that Al-Jazeera lacks freedom in dealing with internal Qatari affairs. The channel talked limitedly about the involved people in the failed attempt of a coup against the Emir of the country. It avoids the treatment of sensitive internal subjects like the denationalization of thousands who belong to Al-Ghufran tribes under the pretext that they had participated in the coup attempt. And like the displacement of people from the Al-Moura tribe to the United Arab Emirates. The relationship between Al-Jazeera's emissions and Qatar's foreign policy remains unclear (el Oifi, 2004, Baghdadi 2, 2009).

Al-Jazeera continued to grow its audience despite the accusations of being far from the deontology adopted by other Arab media (Miladi, 2005).

### **Specialized Expansion of the Channel**

In December 2006, Al-Jazeera in English was launched. It aims to be the unique alternative of the Arab media addressing the West. It adopts a presentation of the Arab world and Islam suits the trend of its possessors and leaders who strive to present themselves as the bearers of the Arabism and Islamism to the whole world. Through the direct, fast and full of suspense coverage, the channel has managed to multiply its audience (Al-Ghadban, 2010).

Al-Jazeera company has several channels as well as training and research centers including: Al-Jazeera Informational, Al-Jazeera Sport; launched in 2003, Al-Jazeera Live; launched in 2005, Al-Jazeera For Kids; launched in 2005, Al-Jazeera International; launched in 2006 (in English), and Al-Jazeera Documentary; launched in 2007 (Shaheen, 2008). Al-Jazeera Center for Training and Development. It conducts media workshops and teaching the public relations is one of its objectives. The Center of Al-Jazeera Studies and Research is devoted to studies on communication, information and cultures (Baghdadi 2, 2009).

## **An Overview on Al-Manar**

### **The Lebanese Media Landscape**

In Lebanon, this small country with many parties and consequently numerous media, the civil war, which broke out in 1975 and ended in 1990, had a notable role in the emergence and deployment of the militia media. The complexity of the Lebanese media is linked to the contradictions and several types of divisions that across Lebanon. There is no national media; it is the communitarianism that builds up the identities of the communication channels and the different political parties control the media space. This seizure transforms the media into propaganda tools. This is easily observed especially during the intra-Lebanese belligerences (Saada, 2009).

In May 2008, following the signing of the Doha Agreement, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Al-Thani clarified the need for media roles to alleviate political tensions; media must calm the spirits and not to cause an escalation.

To reduce propaganda, a law has been enforced, yet the objective has not been achieved; the law remained disregarded. In addition, a verbal escalation of different political leaders was noticed in the media. The political, religious and confessional variables influencing the Lebanese media create a difficulty in seeing objectivity and neutrality that would be adopted by these media (Saada, 2009).

Since 1990, thanks to new information and communication technologies, the media sector has improved while maintaining its loyalty to communitarianism.

The media applied self-censorship by addressing several issues including the most particular subject: the Syrian presence in Lebanon. The Resolution 1559, adopted by the UN Security Council, created a real division within these media. This resolution demands the withdrawal of any foreign presence particularly the Syrian forces, whereas the Lebanese political parties have different points of view which were remarkably presented in the media (Saada, 2009).

On 14 February 2005, after the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rafic Al-Hariri, the differences between the parties have strengthened; Syria is accused by a part of Lebanese population to be behind this attack. The media became propaganda weapons used by the two opposing camps: the Coalition of 14 March and the Camp of 8 March (Saada, 2009).

The 14 March coalition, created as a result of the assassination of Rafic Al-Hariri, demands the independence of Lebanon from intra-Arab and regional problems. Several media support this political vision: Future Television belonging to Al-Hariri family representing the Sunni community. The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) representing the Maronite Christian community. Murr Television representing the Orthodox community. It was closed in 2002 because of a Syrian order and reopened in 2009 following a parliamentary decision (Saada, 2009).

The 8 March Camp employs several media that symbolize opposing visions: Al-Manar Channel. NBN Television transmitting the ideology of the Amal Movement of Nabih Berri; president of the parliament recognized by his solid relation with the Syrian regime. OTV, Orange Television belonging to the Free Patriotic Current of General Michel Aoun. NTV or News TV that is not subjected to a political leader but its communist and pan-Arab attitudes make it appear as a media supporting the vision of the Opposition (8 March) (Saada, 2009).

The two sides exchange accusations. The media of the coalition 14 March claim the involvement of the opposition parties in the assassination of Al-Hariri, while the media of 8 March do not hesitate to accuse the camp of 14 March to be supported by Israel and the United States (Saada, 2009).

Even before the “Arab revolutionary movements” that began at the end of 2010, the Lebanese media were and still are divided according to the attitudes of the parties as regards the Syrian policy.

### **History of Hezbollah**

In 1982, the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon (IRL) was born; a military organization with religious Shiite orientation. Its creation is a reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and its main mission is the defense of the Lebanese territory in particular the south of the country. After a few months, institutions defending the social and political interests of the (IRL) were established. Institutions whose name is: Hezbollah (the Party of God). The Resistance and Hezbollah complement each other, the first ensures the military defense against the occupier and the second directs political and social assurances so that the Resistance reaches its objectives (Daher, 2011).

The Resistance was founded by Sobhi Al-Tufayli and Abbas Al-Moussaoui<sup>31</sup>. Thanks to his Iranian relations, Sobhi Al-Tufayli was able to establish the (IRL). This construction is supported by logistical, financial and organizational aids of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution.

In 1992, Hezbollah was integrated into the parliament, it could since then make its voice and will heard. Over the years, both IRL and Hezbollah have been able to develop their strategies. They have adapted to national, regional and international contexts while maintaining the basic objectives and roles (Daher, 2011).

The means of the IRL were improving over the years. In 1985, IRL pushed the Israeli government to partially withdraw from southern Lebanon. In 1992, Hassan Nasrullah<sup>32</sup> became the leader of the IRL, from that moment, the operations of the IRL against the Israeli troops are carried out regularly; bombarding Israeli locations and attacking their convoys. In 2000, Israel was

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31 The first two General Secretaries of the Resistance. They are Shiite religious.

32 The third General Secretary of Hezbollah; the current leader.

forced to withdraw its forces from the majority of southern Lebanon and it acknowledged its inability to defeat the IRL (Daher, 2011).

Since Israel has maintained domination over many Lebanese territories like the Shebaa hamlets and the Kfarchouba heights, this gave the IRL an opportunity to argue its willingness to keep its weapons after the liberation of 2000. After this date, the main mission of the IRL is to liberate the remaining occupied territory and to release the Lebanese prisoners detained in Israel. In 2004, the IRL managed to release 450 Arabs. Following an operation by which many Israeli soldiers were detained by Hezbollah, an exchange was made (Daher, 2011).

In 2006, the July War broke out; the 33-Days War. Israel bombarded, applied air and land attacks against Lebanon, and concentrated on Shiite areas. The capacity of the IRL was limited to land actions or rocket fire in the direction of northern Israel. At the end and after dramatic results, Israel took out the forces participating in this war. After this conflict, the Resistance continued arming conspicuously and it confirms that it is prepared for any possible attack of the enemy.

In 1990, the Taif Agreement ended the civil war. It demands the disarming of the militias and evokes the Syrian guardianship over Lebanon. Under this tutelage, the IRL was allowed to keep its arsenal and to resume its fight against Israel (Daher, 2011).

### **The Media of Party**

Hezbollah has several media devices: the weekly *Al-Ahd* (the Covenant) since 1984, the *Al-Nour* (the Light) radio since 1988, the electronic weekly *Al-Intiqad* (the Critique) since 2008, the monthly magazine *Baqiatollah* (What Remains of God) and the *Al-Manar* TV channel. Thanks to its massive presence, *Al-Manar* became the main media device of the Party; it is the most important space to reflect massively the self-image that Hezbollah wants to give. It is an Arabic-language channel with anti-Zionist and anti-Israel tendencies (Combe, 2006, Lamloum, 2009).

On 3 June 1991, the terrestrial broadcasting of *Al-Manar* TV was born. In the Southern Suburb of Lebanon, this television began its experimental diffusion, the transmission lasted daily 6 hours. In October 1991, the first news bulletin was launched, it was a 20-minutes bulletin (Shaheen, 2008).

On 17 September 1996, the Lebanese Council of Ministers decided to allow *Al-Manar* television to continue its transmission exceptionally until the end of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, provided that the emissions must be limited; dealing exclusively with the political or military activities of the Resistance (Hammoud, 2007).

In 1997, Lebanese Communication Group appeared. This institution encompasses Al-Manar Television and Al-Nour Radio<sup>33</sup>. Al-Manar became a member of the Coordinating Committee in the Arab States Broadcasting Union (Hammoud, 2007).

In 1998, Al-Manar undertook a contract with the French company (Thomson). It aimed at building a studio of digital production. In order to obtain sophisticated digital techniques, an agreement with Sony was made. Staff training took place in France, Brittany, the Netherlands, Tunisia and in other places. A staff was sent to France in order to get the knowledge and mastering the administration of digital studios. In 2000, Al-Manar television was developed thanks to its transformation into a satellite channel (Hammoud, 2007). This Television covers territories around the world by the Arabsat, Badr3, Nilesat and other satellites (Huyghe 1, 2010). It was broadcasting its programs in Europe via the French Law Society; Eutelsat (Combe, 2006).

In 2004, the party established the "Lebanese Association for the Arts". In 2010, this association was split into two organisms: Al-Rissala association "the Message" and the association "Reviving the Legacy of the Resistance" (Chiara Calabrese, 2013).

### **Directors and Staff**

Hezbollah adopts a culture of secrecy to ensure survival. Since Al-Manar is an institution subjected to the demands of the Party, it is difficult to trace with certainty the forms of organization and management applied to communication structures. The leadership of Hezbollah designate the cadres who lead Al-Manar. The directors of the channel are linked to the first generation of the founders of the Party. These directors are known for their historic struggle against the Israeli occupation. They are the founders of the Islamic Resistance against Israel and they have deep political experiences in the context of the Iranian Revolution and the Israeli occupation of Lebanon (Lamloum, 2009).

The organization chart of Al-Manar consists of six departments directed by officials in accordance with the areas: social, religious, children and youth programs, sports, cultural programs, Lebanese and external programs.

The technical staff and journalists are young and mostly have Shiite tendency, of South Lebanese origin, graduates and bilingual. Hezbollah militants and supporters of the Resistance are also positioned without distinction for important tasks within Al-Manar. This channel engages approximately 350 employees including its correspondents abroad. After the events of 11 September 2001, the number of correspondents was multiplied. New offices were opened, and the

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<sup>33</sup> Middle East Newspaper, 17 December 2004, Number 9516, <http://classic.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=25&issueno=9516&article=271672&feature=1#> available on 23 April 2017.



channel must keep up with new world conditions, new issues and new audience (Hammoud, 2007; Lamloum, 2009).

The Women have intermediate responsibilities precisely in the information sector; they are dependent on a male administration because of their absence from management positions (Lamloum, 2009). The female presenters are veiled. Their seriousness gives a picture of a woman very different from those that appear on other channels' screens where women are exposed as less serious presenting superficial programs (Fontan, 2005).

### **Strategies and Objectives**

Hezbollah's success in ending the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon makes "Resistance" a media principle in the party propaganda. Hezbollah's popularity has increased because of its military success. This popularity is among the Lebanese Shiite milieu as well as among the Arab and Muslim societies as Israel is their common enemy (Hammoud, 2007; Chiara Calabrese, 2013).

According to the director of Al-Manar, their priority is to adopt a unitary Arab-Muslim discourse and to avoid the intervention in quarrels and differences of local forces and Arab regimes. Their channel does not seek the suspense; it relies on sobriety, seriousness and objectivity. The Arab and Muslim communities abroad; in the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe, ask the staff of Al-Manar, through consecutive messages, to deploy satellite broadcasting of the channel as the programs are appreciated by these audiences (Hammoud, 2007).

The basic missions of the channel are to make known the activities of the Resistance by showing the importance of its role. To defend and support the Palestinian people and confront the Occupier (Israel) until the Palestinians get back the occupied territories. To broadcast programs suitable for the Arab-Muslim family; away from suspense and violence. To focus on tolerant religious values and to strengthen and support the dialogue between supporters of different religions and cultures (Shaheen, 2008).

According to the director of the channel, the purpose of the creation of this establishment is to cover the operations of the Resistance. The coverage should be capable of giving viewers a true image facing the image given by the Western media that represent the Resistance as a terrorist organization. Through Al-Manar the history of military resistance is written. It is the means of keeping in memory the victory of the Resistance (Chiara Calabrese, 2013).

The West classifies Hezbollah as a contradictory of democracy and considers it a terrorist organization. In 2000, in the speech of the State of the Union of the United States, Bush declared the party as a terrorist organization having a single purpose: destroying the Western democratic principles. In 2001, Hezbollah condemned the 11 September's attack as a way of asserting its non-acceptance of terrorist movements. However, the party considers its operations against Israel a

legal right; fighting against who violates the rights of others. Al-Manar is the hand of the party to change its old image given by Arab and Western countries (extremist, terrorist and fundamentalist), by a new image; tolerant party, human and having moral objectives. Its priority is the National Interest; it is necessary to abandon the sectarian controversies to keep the National Unity (Fontan, 2005). The mission of the channel is to create a legitimacy favouring the ideology of the Islamic Resistance and consequently favouring the military operations of Hezbollah (Lamloum, 2009).

The contexts surrounding Hezbollah obliged it to rebuild and show itself by a new face. Al-Manar presents the changes in the identity and priorities of the party. It abandons Shiite or pan-Islamism by promoting and propagating pan-Arabism.

In 2000, after the end of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the role played by Hezbollah (Liberator of Lebanon) was no longer effective. Its main objective was to put an end to the Israeli existence in Lebanon. The party had to find another way or another mission to persist that is why the notion of the "Pan-Arab Defender" is adopted; Defender of Arab rights against imperialism. By Al-Manar, the party presents the pan-Arab trends and the Arab fears of the western community and vice-versa. Hezbollah focuses also on the unification of the Lebanese people (Fontan, 2005).

Through Al-Manar, Hezbollah propagates several expressions of which: the "Culture of Resistance" and the "Society of Resistance"; society that is built in institutional frameworks bearing the ideology of the party (Chiara Calabrese, 2013).

The coverage of the Al-Aqsa Intifada and the American war against Iraq was a basis for showing Hezbollah's purpose which is fighting against Israel as well as against the countries with colonial motives in the Arab world (Fontan, 2005).

The dimension of the concept of Resistance was widening. Militarily facing the enemy is only one part of the functions of this Resistance. It is a "choice of life" a "methodology" according to Hassan Nasrullah; it is necessary to resist politically, culturally and by the media (Chiara Calabrese, 2013). Al-Manar is proud to be the first to deal psychologically with the "Zionist enemy" (Fontan, 2005).

A functionality of Al-Manar's programs is the insistence on the irrefutable victory of the Resistance. For example: the television series "The Victorious" tells the story of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon while showing the importance of the resistance as the only choice to win the war. Resisting is the equivalent of gain and victory (Chiara Calabrese, 2013).

One of the objectives of Al-Manar's programs is to unite the Lebanese around the ideas of the Party. This tendency is represented by journalists or thinkers having a respected and serious look and caring Arab Regional Interest (Fontan, 2005).

## **Programming**

The channel presents itself as a respectful and serious media which is able to be followed with confidence by all. Al-Manar takes into consideration the different ages and social segments. The subjects dealt by this television vary: political, economic, social and sportive. Al-Manar tries consecutively to improve its emissions (Fontan, 2005; Hammoud, 2007).

A majority of the themes proposed by Al-Manar does not address internal political issues, rather it deals with the relations between Lebanon and its neighbors (Huyghe 1, 2010). The channel covers activities carried out in Lebanese territory and in Arab countries. It produces programs that tackle the stories and facts of Arab and international leaders, thinkers and writers. It presents itself as a family channel having educational objectives by devoting a remarkable part to the entertainment and to the programs of the young people, children and women. The channel produces 80% of its programs, while 20% are Arab products (Shaheen, 2008).

In its “Foreign Press” program, Al-Manar analyzes articles from foreign media such as LeMonde, Le Nouvel Observateur, le Point or Newsweek. These articles deal with movements that may have an impact on the Arab world particularly on the Middle East (Fontan, 2005).

There are two currents within Hezbollah. The first is conservative and the second is less conservative even with a liberal tendency. This division of currents influences directly the contents of Al-Manar's programs.

Several programs could give the impression that the conservative current tries to keep its control on the channel. However, several other programs are being made to broaden the audience and to attract the non-Shiite Muslims and non-Muslims through renouncing many ideological and religious dogmas.

Al-Manar's programs show two faces of Hezbollah, the first one is Lebanese; interested in internal movements, the second is Arab. The party seeks to become respected not only in the Middle East but also in other Arab nations (Fontan, 2005).

By covering and fully supporting the Palestinian Intifada, the credibility of Al-Manar was recognized by the Palestinian people. The lack of a credible media source inside Palestine, especially the authority's media, gave Al-Manar the opportunity to increase its audience. The channel was broadcasting videos of amateur activists in the field (Lamloum, 2009). In October 2000, Al-Manar increased its coverage of the Palestinian Intifada from four hours to 18 hours, which made the party and the channel defenders of the Palestinian people and their rights. In Palestine, Al-Manar is followed by satellite. The citizens see it as a bearer of Islamic values without being radical. They receive it as an objective channel giving reliable information (Fontan, 2005).

Through several television series political messages are emitted. These messages suitable for the ideology of the party. Ironic programs mocking and criticizing Israel and America are remarkable. The main objective of these broadcasts is to tell the Palestinian people that the party is with them; the party supports them (Fontan, 2005).

According to a BBC Monitoring study, Al-Manar rose from 83<sup>rd</sup> among Arabic-language televisions to the tenth, this was thanks to its coverage of the 33 Days war in summer 2006. Because of Al-Manar this war multiplied the popularity of the party struggling against the Israeli army. But also, the actions and operations of Hezbollah which are admitted by the Arab populations gave a special value to the channel; the profits are reciprocal (Fontan, 2005; Hammoud, 2007; Lamloum, 2009).

In order to obtain financial and political support, religious messages were issued frequently. These messages were addressed to the Lebanese community as well as to other Arab people. The presentation of war victims with the statements of the "martyrs" being with their families for the last time, while arousing the popular emotions, is also a tool to get a support of different types (Fontan, 2005). Al-Manar is recognized by recordings of "martyrs", those who leave their last messages in which they are proud to go to the death for holy goals; they sacrifice themselves to give life to others (Hammoud, 2007).

Psychological warfare supports the military war against Israel. Influencing the morale of Israelis through programs broadcasted in Hebrew is a main weapon. The enemies appear very weak; they cry because of the action and reactions of the fighters of Hezbollah and they return home by being dead. Israeli statements affirming the strength of Hezbollah are mentioned; the enemy recognizes the abilities of the party. Parts of the ironic Israeli programs criticizing the Israeli army are translated into Arabic and in which the power of Hezbollah is recognized and the credibility of the promises of the leader Hassan Nasrullah is marked (Fontan, 2005; Hammoud, 2007).

The program (Conversion of The Image) which studies the coverage of the Israeli media of the Palestinian Intifada was widely received by Arab viewers because they found their image in the enemy media; how Israel describes the events. Al-Manar programs aim at showing what Israel is trying to hide: the killed Israeli fighters and the failures while facing the Palestinians. Moreover, Al-Manar intends to show the Arab peoples the hateful accents found in Israeli programs (Fontan, 2005).

Al-Manar values the science of propaganda. It is interested in the practices of the theories of psychological war. The channel's messages must encourage and excite the Arab populations, at the same time the panic and fear must be created in the midst of the enemy's community. The messages must demoralize the spirit of the Israeli occupier. The strong propaganda of Al-Manar

prompted one of the Israeli leaders to declare the superiority of the psychological weapons of the channel; Al-Manar is victorious in the propaganda war (Shaheen, 2008).

In March 2000, the Hebrew Information Section was born; a new psychological weapon. This section is devoted mainly to highlight the contradictions of the Israeli community, the lies of the leaders, and to incite the Israeli people against the authorities (Hammoud, 2007).

In September 2003, at the second National Conference for the Arab and Islamic media held in Beirut, Hassan Nasrullah spoke of the importance and the role of Al-Manar especially at the time of wars, either in Palestine or in Iraq. In his view, two approaches are required to address to audiences: if the message is directed to non-Arab countries particularly occidental, it is necessary to give an image of the victimized people (rhetoric of victimization), but if the message targets the Arab populations it is important to give the image of the brave; of the heroes beating the enemy and achieving remarkable successes (rhetoric of heroism).

Sowing hope and insisting on that the Resistance is the only solution and the only choice in order to achieve good results are the basis of the propaganda of Hezbollah.

The semantic order in the language of Al-Manar is interesting. For example, instead of using the word "killed" for a Palestinian it uses the word "martyr". The vocabularies adopted in the information live broadcasted, in Arabic and in English, are not the same. To qualify the State of Israel in information in Arabic, the channel adopts defamatory appellations as: "Zionist entity", "Zionist enemy". But it describes the Israeli State, in the information in English, by "Occupier of Palestine". The contents of the information are same in both languages but the form, the choice of concepts or appellations change (Fontan, 2005). All kinds of programs; information, documentaries etc. aim at raising the popular Lebanese and Arab morale to face the external enemy (Mohsen, 1998; Hammoud, 2007).

The channel broadcasts flashes in Hebrew like (We Are Watching You). These aim at creating fear in the hearts of Israelis (Fontan, 2005). The qualitative progress of Al-Manar's emissions prompted the Israeli Television to say that Hezbollah realizes its attack without launching weapons; it is done by the "cannons" of Al-Manar Television (Hammoud, 2007).

A flash presents an Israeli soldier's helmet rolling and followed by a big rock, finally, this great rock crushes the helmet. These pictures are accompanied by a written sentence: "*Occupation to disappearance*". The flashes are distinguished by their distance from ordinary ideological discourses and by their facility; presenting deep ideas with ease. The choice of vocabularies aims to strongly touch the viewer without using boring sentences of which the Arab populations are fed up (Hammoud, 2007).

Clips are very important tools at the level of psychological warfare. They are used intensively. These clips contain images and sentences carefully selected by a team belonging to the direction

of the programs. The Head of Programming and Orientation Youssef Ed-Dahabi clarifies that this team takes into consideration the avoidance of any kind of exaggeration or incorrect glorification.

Clips are both temporary; dealing with current issues, and main clips whose broadcasting is repetitive. For example, on the occasion of the Israeli attacks against Lebanon, the Islamic Resistance Support Association produced a clip, the voice-over was made by Antoine Kerbaj the Lebanese Christian actor. This choice carries an implicit message: the Resistance is not sectarian; the Resistance represents the Lebanese people of all religions and sects (Hammoud, 2007).

The civil peace is a concern presented by the messages of the clips and by many programs. *“Lebanon is not a battlefield, it is a field of coexistence”* this sentence is the end of a clip. To close the gap between Hezbollah and the Al-Hariri Future party, Al-Manar broadcasted a clip encompassing the image of the leader Hassan Nasrullah with the image of President Rafic Al-Hariri. These images were accompanied by these sentences: *“Resistance to protect Lebanon, Resistance to build Lebanon”*. This gives the impression to the people that there is no real problem between the two parties, these two forms of Resistance complement each other, the Future party is there to build and Hezbollah is there to defend (Hammoud, 2005).

Because of their support of Saddam Hussein against US forces, Hezbollah and Al-Manar have created a disappointment among the Iraqi Shiite milieu. Hezbollah intends to confirm its pan-Arab influence while taking advantage of the invasion of Iraq by the coalition led by the United States. Flashes issued on Al-Manar attempted to denounce US policy and actions in Iraq and to present the Iraqi people as innocent victim of the massacres of Americans and Israelis.

The return of the Iraqi Shiite audience to Al-Manar began when the alleged objectives of the war were not realized, especially the freedom (Hammoud, 2005).

The channel has succeeded in attracting a broad audience thanks to its transparency and the diversity of its programs. To increase its audience and to satisfy the different religions and cultures, Al-Manar had to change its speeches; it should take into consideration non-Muslims and their interests. The broadcasts became more diversified (Fontan, 2005). Following the influence of Al-Manar in the Arab and regional space, the Washington Institute Near East Policy hired a researcher in order to write a book on the channel (Hammoud, 2007).

In 2006, during the war of July, Israel bombed the building of the channel. This establishment is constructed of five floors. The destruction prevented the broadcasting for only two minutes. The channel has resumed its work by 75 to 80% of its potentials, with a staff contains 280 of 350 people. The continuing dissemination accompanied by qualitative coverage of field events has made Al-Manar the main source of information covering the events on the fronts of the war. It issued the immediate military announcements. At that time, Al-Manar's audience was 250 million. The military successes of Hezbollah forced Israel to stop this war, which increased the party popularity and of course the popularity of Al-Manar (Mohsen, 1998; Al-Ghadban, 2010).

After this success, the media of the Lebanese political currents and the media of the Arab governments, opponents of the methodology of Hezbollah, began to deform the image of the party, the image which Hezbollah has drawn of himself. According to these media, the party has implicated the country in a devastating war, it is a sectarian party supported and financed by Iran which aims to pass its ideologies in order to reach its interests in the Arab world. The result of this media war against Hezbollah was the loss of a large audience. The doubts about the real objectives of Al-Manar were multiplied (Al-Ghadban, 2010).

### **Obstacles Facing Al-Manar**

The channel has been exposed to numerous criticisms at European and American level. It is considered a terrorist channel (Baghdadi 1, 2009). Al-Manar was accused of incitement to hatred and violence. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004, in its information in French, Al-Manar declared that Israel is carrying out a campaign against it in order to stop its transmission in Europe because its broadcasts reveal the truth of events in Palestine and Lebanon. Al-Manar confirmed that this idea was admitted on Israeli Television (Hammoud, 2007).

In Ramadan, October-November 2003, a Syrian serial inspired by the “Protocol of the Elders of Zion” was issued. This serial, "Al-Shatat"; "the diaspora" deals with the global Jewish conspiracy aiming to dominate and control the whole world. This domination should be realized by the power of money and sex. This artistic work was described as anti-Semitic. It was not issued on the Syrian channels reason why Hezbollah appeared as a platform by which Syria expresses itself. The serial has stirred up the Jewish milieu in France. The President of the Representative Council of the Jewish Institutions in France alerted the public authorities (Fontan, 2005; Combe, 2006).

In response to Israeli accusations of Al-Manar of being anti-Semitic, the director of the public relations of Al-Manar Ibrahim Farhat explained that they highlight the practices of the Occupier against the unarmed citizens, but they respect the Jewish religion, they recognize and dialogue it, they have no problem with this religion, “then how does hostility exist?” (Hammoud, 2007, P.62).

As Al-Manar uses a French satellite, so it is subject to French laws. Sections 1 and 15 of the Act of 30 September 1986 prevent the issuance of content provoking racial and religious hatred. Theoretically the application of French law is possible but practically several obstacles are found (Combe, 2006).

Controlling the satellite channels' broadcasts on French territory is a challenge. The *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel* (CSA) has declared its powerlessness. Extra-European satellite channels must be agreed with the CSA; this contract makes the transmission legal. Yet, there was no convention regulating the diffusion of Al-Manar on Eutelsat. This administrative deficiency has hampered the CSA's ability to punish the channel in question. The reason why the channel had

to carry out an agreement with the CSA which imposes the submission of Al-Manar to its requirements. Al-Manar was obliged to present a file in which it is requested to be contracted with the CSA before October the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004. In case if Al-Manar does not respect the deadline or if the CSA rejects the request for the convention, the channel will be disconnected on Eutelsat on 30 November 2004. The file was presented by Al-Manar and accepted by the CSA, a one-year agreement was made. Al-Manar was subject to strict conditions: not to undermine the dignity of the person, not to incite hatred, violence or discrimination, and not to encourage attitudes of rejection or xenophobia. Ethical obligations must be respected. In case of non-compliance, several punishments would be applied including stopping the broadcasting and reducing the contract deadline. The CSA will be able to take a decision unilaterally; it may terminate the agreement. The CSA has set up a surveillance system, it is a qualified Arabic-speaking and sworn-in staff.

Considering several overruns committed by the channel, the administrative Judge took the decision to stop the diffusion of Al-Manar on Eutelsat. This decision was confirmed by the Council of State on January the 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006 (Combe, 2006).

Al-Manar is part of a bunch of Arab channels, including the National television of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait which broadcast on Eutelsat via Arabsat satellite. Al-Manar's ban would have caused the interruption of these other channels, for which reason Al-Manar asked Arabsat to remove it from the bouquet emitting by Eutelsat (A.Hamoud, 2007).

The prohibition of Al-Manar broadcasting is not useful, technical challenges made it of little importance. Al-Manar can broadcast by other satellites that cover territories around the world and the power of the CSA cannot be imposed (Combe, 2006).

In fact, Al-Manar is not the only channel that carries anti-Israel messages, several Arab or Islamic media are involved. This truth would make the punishment carried out by the CSA practically ineffective.

This State powerlessness, with regard to the control of the contents presented by satellites, affects all countries. For example, Bridge Television, received by cable in America, its broadcasts are addressed particularly to American Muslim populations. These diffusions are charged with images of terrorists and extremists (Huyghe 2).

Since 2004, Al-Manar devoted a service built of ten employees to its website. Following the interruption of its broadcast on Eutelsat, the Direction of the channel has increased its attention to its website. Internet becomes an instrument supporting the other communication devices carrying Hezbollah's propaganda (Lamloum, 2009).

The new communication techniques cause the loss of true control over the media contents. The website of the channel allows the audience to find the information and the different published programs (Combe, 2006). New information and communication technologies have broken the Western monopoly of presentation of conflictual movements taking place in the Arab world. The



deployment of Arabic-speaking satellite channels created a competition between media narrations produced outside the Arab space (Mohsen, 1998; Lamloum, 2009).

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Available on 15 July 2016

## **Chapter 4**

### **An Overview on Propaganda**

As I mentioned in the second chapter, I have previous knowledge of the studied topic. This is due to my daily follow-up of the coverage of the events in Syria by Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar's channels. This knowledge enticed me to classify this research in the propaganda field as I argue that each message is propaganda disregarding the nature and degree of the sender's connection to the event. This is what Jacques Driencourt, who believes that everything is propaganda, emphasizes (Ellul, 1973). It is impossible for ideologies to survive, continue and be fruitful without the media within which most of the information is categorized as propaganda. Propaganda does not live without media, and most of the content of media is propaganda (Bernays, 2007). Success in the military war is closely connected to the strength of propaganda. Analyzing the news frames and the verbal and non-verbal signs of all kinds and forms requires deep knowledge of propaganda which employs the strength of signs and symbols in order to influence the recipient (Al-Assaf, 2012). Then, my classification of this research in the field of propaganda emerges from my belief in its comprehensiveness. Propaganda does employ the verbal and non-verbal signifiers, not vice versa. The ideas and ideologies can be understood only through the study of the verbal and non-verbal signs. Spread is an aim of every ideology. Eventually, the study of ideologies first and foremost falls into the field of propaganda. To prove this argument, in this chapter I am going to tackle a group of pivots which put propaganda in its historical context and in the course of its development up to the present time. These pivots deal with the fields, forms and conditions of the existence of propaganda in addition to its tools and its linkage to the forms and types of media. Moreover, they will tackle the relation of propaganda to the nature of societies, the factors of the success of propaganda and the propaganda technical methods which are directly connected to structuring the content. Finally, the chapter is going to briefly highlight the basic principles of propaganda in the times of war which is going to allow us to compare these principles to those of propagandas as they were presented on the screens of Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar.

#### **Introduction**

Propaganda has been studied in various fields such as: History, Journalism, Politics, Sociology and Psychology. It has also been studied from multi-specialized perspectives and points of view. Historically speaking, the study of propaganda deals with examining the practices of the propagandist as events, and studying the subsequent events which can be considered consequences resulting from practicing propaganda. In journalism and media, the study of propaganda means analyzing and perceiving the mechanism of media management, the mechanism of information formation, and the factors of structuring the mental image. In political sciences, propaganda deals with investigating and analyzing the ideologies of the practitioners, affecting the public opinion,

and the effect of the public opinion on the bases of the elite. In the light of sociology, propaganda means the study of the social movements and counter-movements, the actions and reactions towards several issues and subjects. In the field of psychological analysis, propaganda means studying and determining the probable effects on the individuals (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012).

Any talk on propaganda must be accompanied by a talk on the public opinion. Propaganda is unimportant without masses or recipients who interact and get affected (Hammoud A, 2008). Public opinion is the dominant view among a group of individuals or communities who share common interests and concerns towards an attitude, an event or a subject. It is the prevailing values, views, beliefs and judgments regardless of their validity (Doob, 1966; Hilmi, 2005). Le Bon discusses the psychology of the masses who are subjected to many incentives some of which are positive and others negative, but their power of effectiveness is so great that the survival instinct sometimes vanishes because of them (Le Bon, 1997). There are different levels of public opinion. It can be local (specific of an area), or specific of a certain country and it can be universal. The spontaneous public opinion takes place when people communicate with each other and when they are concerned about the same issue. Unquestionable public opinion includes all the ideas and attitudes about what man needs to improve the structure of society from bad to the better like eliminating corruption and realizing economic and security stability. The inactive public opinion is characterized, for example, by an attitude of indifference in front of the government due to weakness or fear. The active public opinion is completely clear when the people, for example, revolt against the ruling government so as to overthrow it. Temporary public opinion is related to a subject, and specific time and place such as wars and natural disasters. The holistic public opinion is related to everything concerning religion, general ethics and customs. The covert public opinion is formed when the society cannot express its true opinion or attitude. The overt public opinion appears when the people can express themselves especially through different mass media (M.Abdullah, 2011; Hammoud A.B 2008; Hussein, 1997; Al-Tuhami, 1982).

### **Origin of Propaganda**

These days, propaganda is being employed in various fields and considered one of the most important and serious means of affecting the opinions and morale of individuals. It has got specialized experts whose help countries seek so that they can realize victories. Defeating the enemies requires close contact between the militant operations on the one hand and propaganda and its pillars on the other (Yousef, 2004).

Propaganda is as old as man himself. He has spontaneously practiced it and has been an expert in creating new methods of affecting others. However, elevating propaganda to the level of an art and a science – scientific technique – is relatively modern in man's history (Nilsson & Österlund, 2014; Al-Assaf, 2012; Al-Ridha, 1998). Plato discussed the importance of what should be said to the people and what should not so that the ruler can ensure the loyalty of the citizens to the

discipline and the leaders (Al-Shirazi, 2006). The German media scholar Claus Martin attributes the origin of propaganda to Aristotle (Mustafa, 2006). Aristotle dealt with the discourse arts and divided the communication attitude into factors: the orator or the sender, the masses or the recipients, and the speech or the message. He discussed the importance of the orator's knowledge and understanding of the thoughts he introduces to the masses as well as the sender's perception of the characteristics of the masses in order to ensure a greater impact (Al-Shirazi, 2006).

The Greeks and Pharaohs practiced propaganda so as to create a sense of strength in the fighters and convince the political and intellectual opponents. The Romans employed many methods of propaganda some of which are processions and parties in honor of the victorious leaders, and orations and rhetoric during elections. As for many civilizations, propaganda was one of the most employed means of unifying the people as well as legalizing wars to realize expansion and establishing empires (Mustafa, 2006; Al-Omari, 1965; Abdul-Qader, 1962). The leaders employed all means so that they could magnify their ideas and create great images of themselves (Nilsson & Österlund, 2014).

In addition, many stories and teachings of the Old Testament can be interpreted as propaganda texts which include a lot of the characteristics and basic factors of propaganda. They justify and legalize any aggressive actions against the opponents in opinion and doctrine (Mustafa, 2006). The discourse content of the Quran, as the basic law of Islam, includes a lot of the characteristics of propaganda: inducement and intimidation, promising and frightening, warning and threatening (Al-Shirazi, 2006). The system of governance in Islam included what is called Da'wa – Missionary activity – where the Da'ia – preacher – employs all his rhetorical and intellectual abilities so as to affect the recipients and entice them to embrace Islam (Al-Assaf, 2012; Al-Dulaimi, 2010).

The term "propaganda" is derived from the Greek "propagatus" which means producing a new plant from a parent plant. This term was first employed by the Pope Gregory XV in 1622 when he realized that it was no longer possible to impose religious unity by force. The Pope established an authority for spreading the Catholic doctrine peacefully and without resorting to war (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012; Chomsky, 2002; Pratkanis, 1992)<sup>35</sup>. A lot of historical studies attribute the use of the term "propaganda" to Pope Urban VIII who established a propaganda council in 1627 for spreading the Catholic doctrine with the purpose of facing the Protestant movements. He set up a training authority for propaganda "Collegium Urbanum" which was oriented towards the foreign tasks of the Catholic Church (Bernays, 2007; Sukkari, 1991). In France the term propaganda was used to indicate the materials employed in elections such as leaflets and posters. Until World War II, it indicated to every communication campaign, whether private or public, in order to spread and promote ideas (Chomsky, 2002).

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35 English Oxford Living Dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/propaganda> available on 06 October 2017.

The invention of printing by the German Gutenberg in the fifteenth century played a vital role in the spread of propaganda by printed means such as newspapers, periodicals, leaflets, and news messages. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, propaganda was used in its political meaning and modern means especially press (Bernays, 2007; Taylor, 2000; Al-Omari, 1965). The same thing applies to the roles of radio, telephone, telegraph and even railways. The development accelerated the spread of information (Bernays, 2007).

The French revolution established the concept of propaganda; the press had a huge ability of affecting the masses which led the politicians to employ it as a major means in the political conflict. Napoleon Bonaparte employed the press propaganda in order to strengthen the morale of the French soldiers and to introduce the aims of his campaigns to the peoples he conquered (Al-Maslami, 1990; Dominique, 1960).

For a long time, the term propaganda was not a signifier of the negative motives and desires of the propagandist. However, the 20<sup>th</sup> century imposed a bad mental image of propaganda and made it seem as a form of lying, deception and misleading (Andén, 2005; Saad, 1979; Linebarger, 1954). During the World Wars I and II, propaganda was practiced in a misleading way. False news which demonized the opponents and dehumanized them was spread. A lot of the pillars of propaganda aimed at raising the morale of the allied fighters and weakening that of the enemy. It was practiced as ideological wars and many dictatorial governments employed it with the purpose of achieving power and of expanding governance. For instance, the fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany, and Stalin's propaganda which aimed at eliminating the opposition. Communism did not differentiate between propaganda and incitement in such a way that propaganda became a means of destroying the bourgeois concepts and spreading the socialist ideas (Nilsson & Österlund, 2014; Yousef, 2004; Denquin, 1997; Carruther, 1994; Saad, 1979).

During World War I, the American president Wilson established a propaganda committee in whose membership great academic intellectuals and theoreticians participated (Mustafa, 2006). Under the management of the Propaganda Minister "Goebbels", the German propaganda addressed the emotions and feelings of the people leaving no place for thinking and analyzing. On the other hand, the allies launched a psychological war depending on basics of propaganda. So, the war among the countries showed that propaganda was a necessary weapon of winning the military war (Nilsson & Österlund, 2014; Jackall, 1995). The two World Wars turned propaganda from an experimental art into a field with rules. Propaganda was no longer exclusive to war, it rather extended to peace times and the success of any political regime became strongly dependent on the pillars of propaganda and the strength of its impact (Sukkari, 1991; Al-Omari, 1965).

Many countries abhor the term "propaganda" for historical and a lot of other reasons the most important of which is the connection of propaganda to the goals of the propagandist who is directed by the desire to control and rule rather than its connection to objectivity. Due to their rejection of the term propaganda, some Arab countries give other names to government bodies which do the



work of spreading propaganda. For example, The Ministry of Culture, National Guidance, Moral Guidance. Through these bodies, the state practices a propaganda activity with the aim of controlling the minds and feelings of people in order to entice them to support and back its policy and, eventually, urging them to respond to the ideas and attitudes it advocates and to get subjected to all the alterations which it imposes (Al-Dulaimi, 2010; Al-Shumaimari, 2010; Mustafa, 2006).

### **Definition and Labeling of Propaganda**

Propaganda employs persuasive strategies. However, it differs from persuasion in target. Propaganda is a form of communication which tries to achieve a response that reinforces the propagandist's targeted end and purpose. Persuasion is an interactive process which tries to meet the needs and desires of both the persuader and the one who is persuaded (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012). Ellul sees that propaganda, regardless of the labels we give it, has to a great extent become a general phenomenon in the modern world. He also considers most people as very easy preys of propaganda (Ellul, 1973).

Propagandists are any actors that attempt to affect the recipient (Ellul, 1973). They are those who impose the daily life rules and the details of our activities on us. They could be people from different sectors, people who lead views and promote ideas which serve their interests: presidents, clergymen, politicians, journalists or any other person interested in affecting the behavior of people (Bernays, 2007; Linebarger, 1954).

Tonnies sees that propaganda is provoking the public opinion extensively in order to spread and consolidate ideas regardless of their validity, truthfulness or accurateness. Merton defined propaganda as a set of symbols (signs) which affect opinion, belief or behavior towards the issues about which the slices of the community disagree. As for Calter, propaganda is an intended attempt done by an individual or a group in order to form or change the tendencies of other groups through employing the means of communication. The goal of this is achieving the conformity between the reaction of the people exposed to the impact of propaganda and that which is desired by the propagandist (Al-Assaf, 2012).

According to Oxford Advanced American Dictionary, propaganda is: "Ideas or statements that may be false or exaggerated and that are used in order to gain support for a political leader, party, etc."<sup>36</sup>.

English Oxford Living Dictionaries defines propaganda as: "Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view"<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Oxford Advanced American Dictionary,

[http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american\\_english/propaganda?q=Propaganda](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/propaganda?q=Propaganda)

available on 06 October 2017.

<sup>37</sup> English Oxford Living Dictionaries,

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/propaganda> available on 06 October 2017.

According to Cambridge Dictionary propaganda is: “information, ideas, opinions, or images, often only giving one part of an argument that are broadcast, published, or in some other way spread with the intention of influencing people's opinions”<sup>38</sup>.

The definitions of propaganda in the dictionary of "Military Terms" can be summarized by: information, opinions, doctrines or special forums aiming at supporting the national goal. It is designed to affect opinions, points of view, passions, or behavior of any group in the favor of the official whether directly or indirectly (Amin, 1992).

Propaganda is mentioned in "A Dictionary of Media Terms" as follows: It is influencing the mass opinions and beliefs in order to make them adopt a given, negative or positive, direction towards a system or a doctrine. Propaganda also attempts to prepare the moods of the individuals to accept and absorb points of view (Badawi, 1977).

Propaganda in the opinion of Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, is the ability to convince the masses of a certain idea so that each individual becomes strongly faithful in it. This idea becomes such a fixed doctrine that the individual can neither escape nor dispose of it (Khalil, 1982).

According to Malcolm, propaganda is employing symbols in an intent, organized planned, and suggestive way with the purpose of altering and controlling opinions, ideas and values. Propaganda is always located in a socio-cultural context without which its psychological and cultural features cannot be understood (Malcolm, 1970).

Doob sees that propaganda is the organized attempt which an individual or individuals with interest perform in order to control the attitudes and actions of a group of individuals through using insinuation. The goal of propaganda is leading the individuals or groups to embrace a certain idea or tendency, or leading them to do something (Doob, 1989, 1966). In accordance to Walter Lippmann, propaganda is the attempt to influence the personalities of individuals and control their behavior for purposes which are considered unscientific or of susceptible value. This takes place in a certain society and at a definite time (Lippmann, 1922).

For Lasswell (1927), propaganda is deception through symbols, words, images, music and lines which aim at achieving the intended goal. From Berelson's viewpoint, propaganda is the attempt of influencing the trends of a group of individuals about a raised issue. It endeavors to create collective trends through employing expressive symbols (Berelson & Janowitz, 1966). Lenin sees that the basic factor and constituent of propaganda is thrilling, instigation and agitation among the people's factions (Yousef, 2004).

As for Jacques Ellul, it is necessary to study propaganda as a social phenomenon. In its broad meaning, propaganda includes the following fields: 1- Psychological action, where the propagandist seeks to change the opinions in psychological means. 2- Psychological war fare, where the propagandist deals with a foreign or internal opponent trying to destroy their morale

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38 Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/propaganda?q=Propaganda> + available on 20 October 2017.

through psychological methods. Logical arguments may be employed, too. Making the opponents doubt their beliefs and actions is one of the most prominent tasks of psychological war. 3-Re-Education & brain washing, this approach aims at turning the opponent into an ally or at mobilizing the targeted masses to serve the interests of the propagandist. 4- Public & human relation: including public relations into propaganda helps make the targeted individual or society comply with the goals of propaganda (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012; Dale & Gould, 2001; Ellul, 1973).

Propaganda can be considered a tactic for social pressure in such a way that it creates groups having a unified psychological build; propaganda should achieve mental and emotional homogeneity among the targeted individuals (Al-Shumaimari, 2010; Larsåke, 2005).

In accordance with Hitler, ideas or propaganda cannot be considered successful unless they are embraced by the majority of the people who show their readiness to fight and sacrifice in their cause (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012; Linebarger, 1954).

Propaganda includes the efforts exerted by the propagandist for directing or subjugating the ideas and actions of the people. The efforts of subjugation and direction are centered on the fields of controversial beliefs and values among these people. In order to achieve this goal, the propagandist employs the various sorts of symbols: words, images, colors, gestures and others (Al-Dulaimi, 2010; Larsåke, 2005).

Propaganda mostly entices people to adopt behaviors without thinking. The absence of logic controls the relation between propaganda and the recipient; the recipients neither pay attention to nor seek the logical reasons which motivated them to embrace the ideas yet they strongly support and defend the bases of the propaganda they believe in (Badr, 1997; Hussein, 1997). The attempt of persuading others to accept a certain doctrine often depends on illogical background which does not give evidence or proofs. However, generally speaking, propaganda no longer uses the same mechanisms of the first half of the last century when it was based on lies, emotional enticement, and ignoring logic and science. The immense progress of communication means and information exchange imposed new rules on propaganda. In order not to lose its strength and ability of influence, propaganda had to change the rules which control it; employing logic, proofs and evidence has become important in the process of polarizing the public opinion (Al-Shumaimari, 2010; Troude-Chastenot, 2006). Previously, propaganda depended on the personality of the propagandist, his personal talents and his individual ambitions. Today, it depends on scientific analyses and accurate studies. In order to secure success, the propagandist has to carry out accurate equations and perceive all the data which affect the influential ability of propaganda (Larsson, 2005; Andén, 2005; Ellul, 1973).

According to Jacques Driencourt everything is propaganda because everything in the political and economic fields seems penetrated and formed through propaganda (Ellul, 1973). Propaganda enters the field of industry and that of controlling workers. It exists in all the fields and especially employed by the opinion leaders (Chomsky, 2002). These days, many people think that they read

information and facts, but half the news and media information is considered propaganda and attempts to influence the minds and public opinion (Bernays, 2007). Every day, we are exposed to or bombarded by persuasive messages which fall upon us one after the other. These calls attempt to convince us through manipulation of symbols and toying with the basic human sentiments. This age or time is that of propaganda (Linebarger, 1954).

A lot of American sociologists have totally abandoned the term "propaganda" considering that it is very difficult to define and limit its dimensions accurately. Many observers consider that propaganda is a set of gimmicks, applications and practices. In addition, specialists in sociology and psychology reject the scientific feature or characteristic of these practices. Some researchers think that propaganda is considered a technique rather than a science. However, the new technique or the modern propaganda is based on several branches of knowledge and science. Apart from the progress of scientific research in the fields of sociology and psychology, propaganda would have remained in its initial stages and would not have become strong and of enormous influential ability as it is now (Ellul, 1973).

### **The Fields of Propaganda**

Propaganda has several types and forms, some of which are commercial, political, religious, and moral. Moreover, the names of propaganda differ: politically, it means promotion or propaganda; economically, it means advertisements; and religiously, it is called missionary.

There are common features between the skills required by commercial advertising and the other types of propaganda as, eventually, ideas are marketed products. Nevertheless, commercial advertising is easy in comparison with the other types. The bases, limits, abilities, and methods of commercial advertising have become accurately known by the advertisers. Most commercial advertisements depend on repetition and stimulants connected to the social factors and controls in addition to motivating instincts and instinctual motives. However, political, social or religious propaganda is considered a more difficult task due to the interference of factors and effects which are characterized by intricacy and complexity. Moreover, the goals of propaganda differ; the commercial one aims at material profit, but the goals of the other types are linked to changing the beliefs and behaviors. Achieving material profit could be part of their tasks in the service of the interests of the propagandists (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012; Al-Assaf, 2012; Al-Dulaimi 2011; Chomsky, 2001).

The political propaganda which governments, parties, and pressure groups carry out differs from the social propaganda which is less obvious and closer to social upbringing that is considered a process of implanting the prevailing standards and values through which the society fuses its members. Social propaganda is based on the rule of indoctrination where the propagandists implant the beliefs which they want the targeted society to adopt. The implantation process is carried out in many ways: advertisements, commercial movies, public relations, technology in general, school

teaching, and even in social services, the individual becomes wholly surrounded by the principles and beliefs which are intended to be disseminated. Sometimes, the political propaganda coincides with social propaganda when this is to the advantage of the propagandist (Troude-Chastenet, 2006).

The political propaganda is the attempt to influence the public opinion and the behavior and attitudes of the society or societies towards a certain issue or issues. It is the language directed to the masses, the means which employs all the forms of symbols in order to achieve a propaganda goal (Durandin, 1986).

Political propaganda is mixed and interlaced with other terms such as incitement. Incitement is urging to carry out a certain action or arousing to abstain from doing a certain action. Incitement may have many forms. According to Lenin, it is using half the truth and slogans to mobilize the masses who are unable to understand the complicated truths. However, political propaganda, in the viewpoint of Lenin, is employing the historical and scientific proofs in order to persuade the educated minority. The incitement and propaganda collaborate to ensure the success of the persuasive and influential process on the largest scale (masses and intellectual elite) (Al-Abd, 2008).

Counter political propaganda is a synonym of the concept of "political war" the use of which was common in Britain after World War I then, later, spread and expanded during World War II. Political war depends on the direct and indirect legible, aural and visual communication channels (Schiller, 1986; Mousa, 1986). The offensive propaganda mainly concentrates on people rather than objects. Simultaneously, it tackles the objects related to the daily needs of the people; information of social and economic value (Al-Obaidi, 1995).

Political propaganda plays with emotions in order to create a state of intellectual tension and emotional charges which must lead to deforming the logical sequence (Sukkari, 1991). Propaganda is the process of psychological agitation with the purpose of achieving the manipulation with the logic of the recipient or the person exposed to propaganda. However, this does not mean that propaganda does not address the mind and try to persuade it with arguments and proofs; in many cases, it tries to simultaneously attract the mind and emotions of the recipient (Rabee, 1970; Nasr, 1967).

### **The Forms of Propaganda**

Types of propaganda differ in accordance with the desired influences, its trends, and the mechanism of applying and executing it (Al-Dulaimi, 2011; Al-Shumaimari, 2010).

According to its content, propaganda is divided into white, grey and black.

- 1- White propaganda: it is considered an open activity which has clear features and goals. The propagandist shows his/her opinions and beliefs and pleads a response, backing and support by the recipient. So, the source is known, and its aims are explicit, and the masses know and recognize that they are being subjected to an attempt to influence them.
- 2- Black propaganda: it does not uncover its identity, true sources and goals. The people do not recognize that there is someone who wants to affect them or to incite them to embrace ideas and beliefs for the purpose of creating behaviors that accord with the goal of the propagandist. If directed to the opponent or enemy, black propaganda grows in a secret way in order to spread *fitna* and confusion of the public opinion.
- 3- Grey propaganda: it stands in the middle between the black and white propagandas. It uncovers some of its features and hides others. For example, it may show its true sources and hide its goals (Al-Dulaimi, 2011; Al-Shumaimari, 2010; Linebarger, 1954).

According to its sources, propaganda is divided into vertical and horizontal.

- 1- Vertical propaganda: it comes from the top of the political, social or religious authority's pyramid. It aims at influencing the basis represented by the public. So, this propaganda moves from the top to the bottom. It wraps the masses while those who practice it remain outside the wrap; the propagandist remains away from the masses although he is one of them, and the reactions of the masses are responses to the calls and voice of the leader. Mostly, the individuals enter a state of intellectual and practical slumber; they never make decisions and just respond to and carry out those of the leader (Al-Assaf, 2012; Troude-Chastenet, 2006; Abu-Isbaa, 1999).
- 2- Horizontal propaganda: it is launched by a member of a certain group rather than by the head of an authority or a president. One of its goals is that the propagandist becomes the head or the leader of the group. It is clearly applied in the elections of the parties. Ellul sees that horizontal propaganda is a form of propaganda which recently developed as far as its content is concerned; it can be political or social or both. It is considered horizontal because it takes place inside the group rather than from top to bottom. The individuals are equal; they communicate with each other and have the duality of discourse. The most prominent characteristic of this propaganda is that it takes place in small groups so that the individual can carry out activities and dialogues and can form or crystallize his/her opinion after studying the opinions of the other individuals who belong to the same group. The degree of persuasion and influence could be slow in horizontal propaganda because meetings must be continually available. Also, people must be organized accurately as each individual should belong to a group that should not contain a large number of members so that each individual can have the opportunity to participate. Homogeneity is a characteristic that must be available in every group (Al-Assaf, 2012; Troude-Chastenet, 2006).

According to its function propaganda is divided into agitating and integral.

1- Agitation propaganda: it is led by a group or a party that endeavors to govern. Through it, the masses are agitated in order to accept changes that may be radical in many fields and levels. It is the greatest and the most visible. It is important during the times war as it plays the role of justifying malice and hatred towards the enemy. This propaganda can also be devastative or provocative of revolutionary movements or movements of change (Troude-Chastenet, 2006; Ellul, 1973).

2- Integration propaganda: it aims at creating social equilibrium, unifying and strengthening the society. This propaganda is the favored one by many governments. It may be important in the countries which contain different nationalities and races or in the newly independent young countries. Integration propaganda is considered more accurate and complicated than the Agitation propaganda because it requires deeper psychological analyses of the society's slices. Moreover, it does not seek temporary stimulation; it, rather, aims at building a homogenous social structure (Al-Assaf, 2012). The agreement or the unity of attitude and opinion are the main causes for the success of any movement or action; unity is the source of the power of efficiency. This propaganda is efficient as long as it is directed to comfortable, settled, educated and more enlightened medium. However, Ellul believes that the more enlightened individuals are the more difficult to persuade, manipulate or control. There is a big need for this type of propaganda for flourishing the technical society. The mass media, which greatly helps the reinforcement of the results of integration propaganda, is employed (Troude-Chastenet, 2006; Ellul, 1973).

According to its method, propaganda is divided into explicit and implicit.

1- The explicit propaganda is open, led by a known organization, and has clear goals.

2- The implicit propaganda hides its sources and goals, and the public opinion is unaware of it; therefore, it is extremely dangerous (Al-Assaf, 2012).

Ellul (1973) sees that it is still quite difficult to define the constituents and nature of propaganda since it is a secret action to a large extent.

### **The Conditions of the Existence of Propaganda**

Pursuant to Ellul, a group of social and objective conditions should be available. The social conditions are characterized by the existence of an individual society and a mass society (two integrated rather than contradicted societies), the existence of a public opinion, and mass media. The most prominent objective conditions of the existence of the comprehensive propaganda are 1. At least the need for a medium living standard. The propagandist cannot reach the poor individual who cannot afford and obtain the mass media; the living standard is the one which provides people with the chance of being exposed to propaganda. 2. The cultural and educational standard. The

existence and nature of propaganda are linked to the cultural and educational standard of the recipient. The agitation propaganda may be suitable for the uneducated people or those who have a low educational and cognitive degree. However, the propaganda which is based on logical and intellectual grounds is directed to those who have a convenient degree of knowledge. The messages directed to uneducated people must include crude, primitive, simple and clear information that is able to oblige them to be simply convinced. Whereas the educated people may not be persuaded or have their ideas satisfied by simple propaganda. Evidence and logic are important basis to play with the ideas of the educated; this is a principle of the Nazi propaganda (Troude-Chastenet, 2006; Linebarger, 1954).

### **The Means of Propaganda**

The propaganda ideas can be promoted through a lot of means of communication the most prominent of which are:

- 1- The printed means: like newspapers, magazines, books, periodicals, leaflets, wall charts and posters.
- 2- Aural means: such as speeches, songs, chants, and dialogues. Radio is considered one of the most important vocal means.
- 3- Visual means: like photographs, signs, flags, symbols and slogans.
- 4- Audio-visual means: combines voice with image such as television, movies, theatres as well as shows and processions. Combining image with voice leads to deepening the effect of propaganda (Al-Assaf, 2012; Al-Dulaimi, 2011).

There are also other means such as press conferences and meetings. Some countries have or form cultural institutions, universities, institutes, schools, libraries and banking services in other countries so that they can spread propaganda indirectly (Jowett, & O'Donnell, 2012). In accordance to Chomsky, propaganda spreads everywhere and by all means even churches, schools, and all institutions have a propaganda purpose (Chomsky, 2002).

In order to achieve the optimal purpose of propaganda, the convenient medium or media should be chosen. Moreover, cultural diversity and the differences of the tastes of the targeted masses should be taken into account during the propaganda programs are being formed. The interaction between the mass media and the direct personal means of communications doubles the influential ability of propaganda (Mustafa, 2006; Troude-Chastenet, 2006).

The progress of communication techniques increases the effect of propaganda, but it simultaneously causes the propagandist to face huge challenges. The recipients may be exposed to propaganda and counterpropaganda at the same time, or may be exposed to a group of propagandas. Consequently, the process of polarization and persuasion them will be easy only if the propaganda is constructed on bases that take the maximum level of the factors which influence



the formation of the individual's trend into consideration. In other words, the process of propaganda model building needs strong intellectual planning. This progress must be very magnificent, but the development of information led to exposing the human being to hundreds of messages daily. The exposure of the recipient to pressure makes him reply by short messages, at any time he/she can, with short perceptive or mental processes. The ability to think and go deeper in ideas is not available because of the immense pumping of information (De Craecker-Dussart, 2011; Linebarger, 1954).

Who manages the internet? Many electronic crimes take place every day. How can the flow of wrong information be stopped without violating the freedom of expression? How can the misleading information be eliminated? These pivots show how dangerous the internet is as a free space for practicing propaganda and spreading it on the largest scale (Goulet, 2015; Kavumbagu, 2003). The internet is able to deeply influence the minds of the people and lead the social behavior. It changed people into preys of misleading, but it broke the one information mould which the censorship of governments controls (Peltier, 2014; Kavumbagu, 2003). The internet is not only a space for misleading but also for uncovering misleading (De Craecker-Dussart, 2011). This network is a broad area for all the contradicting ideas such as inviting to integrate in one peaceful and settled world and inviting to hate the others and accusing them of being unbelievers (Peltier, 2014; Kavumbagu, 2003). The relative free service of the internet, the interactive characteristic caused all to be senders and recipients at the same time; everybody is active in the communication process, the possibility of mixing the image with the sound in writing, in music and in colors. All these factors increased the importance of the internet as a means for pumping propagandas and influence (Peltier, 2014; Huyghe, 2013; Kommers, B.S., 2001). Music makes propaganda permeate the people more strongly. Exploiting music is able to direct and lead the masses; music plays a vital role in cultural development. The talk about the seriousness and importance of music is attributed to Plato. Employing music by the oppressive regimes makes it a dangerous weapon that controls the emotions and energy of the peoples which receive the propagandas of these regimes. The Nazist propaganda interfered in the content of the German music; it obliged the musicians to follow a pattern which satisfies the leaders of the propaganda and the Nazi party. As for the musicians, the party continued attempting to purify the symphonic orchestras from the Jews and other "lower races"; the works of those who belong to Jewish origin were banned in addition to expelling the musicians and the critics who do not recognize the Nazist aesthetics (Andersson & Geisler, 2007).

#### **Means differ pursuant to the type and goal of propaganda: Strategic and Tactical Propaganda**

Strategic propaganda is characterized by plans and goals which are carried out and achieved on the long run. It is characterized by comprehensiveness and place and time unlimitedness. It may aim at spreading and reinforcing ideas and beliefs for many generations in a row, so its influence can be large and deep; the idea may turn into a social doctrine. On the other hand, the plan of tactical propaganda aims at achieving goals on the short run. It is a concentrated and extrovert

propaganda in which the methods of inducement and intimidation, and raising or destroying the moral of the targeted society (Yousef, 2004; Hamza, 1987; Schiller, 1986).

#### Means of strategic propaganda

Strategic propaganda requires mobilizing many media in order to implant, nourish and deepen ideas into the intended societies. In order that any piece of information can become a prevailing social doctrine or taken for granted and axiomatic, the propagandist should pump this piece of information into the communication channels in a way that surrounds the recipients from all sides in order to make them reach the stage of believing the idea and eventually absolutely believe in it and probably be ready to sacrifice their lives in its cause. The mass media are considered one of the most important means of strategic propaganda (Mustafa, 2006; Yousef, 2004; Hamza, 1987; Ellul, 1973).

#### Means of tactical propaganda

These means are often employed during war targeting both the military personnel and civilians at the same time. Destroying the morale of the opponent and raising that of the supporting people and soldiers is considered the most prominent tasks. Words and symbols stand side by side with the battles in such a way that the effect of a propaganda sentence may be more dangerous and effective than the cannons and machine guns (Raileanu, 2013). Tactical propaganda is characterized by being continuous and condensed. Here are some of the means of tactical propaganda:

1. **Leaflets:** according to Goebbels, leaflets are considered an effective means of provoking revolution, rebellion, attacking certain factions, or enticing to support a party or an authority, as it is characterized by easiness of distribution and simplicity of forms. The way the leaflets are distributed is itself considered a means of war. Goebbels sees that throwing the leaflets on the enemy's ground by planes may create a cloud of sadness and dismay in addition to weakening the psychological steadfastness of the enemy. The German planes used to throw pieces of paper on the enemy's soldiers asking them to surrender as the battalion No. so and so did, even though this did not happen (Mustafa, 2006). Leaflets were the most common means before radio (Sukkari, 1991; Khalil, 1982).
2. **Press conferences:** they are considered a kind of face-to-face communication which can achieve a high degree of persuasion. Moreover, when mass media transmit them, their persuasive ability doubles. Nazist propaganda was characterized by the ability of the propagandists to choose the meetings sites or the places where Hitler or Goebbels made their speeches in order to mobilize the public opinion of the German people (Hamza, 1987; Khalil, 1982; Al-Omari, 1965).
3. **Speeches of Presidents:** during carrying out the propaganda plans, Hitler was careful about the necessity of choosing the places where he used to make his speeches. Pursuant to him, the spirit of propaganda should be convenient to the spirit and mind of the

masses in order to be able to polarize the largest possible number of the targeted masses (Mustafa, 2006).

4. **Propaganda Planning Institutions:** a ministry of propaganda was established at the time of Hitler. The Propaganda Minister Goebbels had such a great stature that made him seem (as far as importance is concerned) the second man in the country next to Hitler. This ministry carried out central planning of propaganda and conveyed and literally implemented the sayings and commands of the minister. Watching people's trends and reactions during listening to foreign radios was one of its most prominent tasks (Nilsson & Österlund, 2014 ; Andersson & Geisler 2007; Mustafa, 2006).

### **Propaganda in Accordance with the Nature of Societies**

There is difference between the methods of applying propaganda in a democratic society from a dictator society. However, the desire to dominate and control is the same (Bernays, 2007). From the viewpoint of Chomsky (2002), conscious playing with the public opinion and social behavior of the masses is a prominent characteristic not only in the dictator societies, but also in the democratic societies. The availability of the means of communication and techniques leads to facilitating the process of controlling the ideas and the social awareness. Chomsky sees that democracy is in danger because many media networks are controlled by the non-government tyrants (the private sector). The democratic society is dominated by the smart or conscious manipulation which controls, manages and directs the opinions and habits. The manipulators or controllers form an invisible government which manages the state and directs the course of events in a way that serves their interests. We are really ignorant of those who control us, manage the affairs of our lives, form our tastes, mould our souls and minds, and blow the ideas into us in such a way that we think they are our doctrines. The invisible leaders dominate millions of human beings. Generally speaking, one does not perceive how the data and behaviors of those who occupy the frontal part of the scene are ordered by intelligent persons who operate behind the scenes (Bernays, 2007).

In the democratic society, public opinion is controlled by actors who employ and make use of the originally existing traditional social powers which have a great influence on people. These actors create and innovate new tools and methods that enable them of dominating the world and controlling the course of events, and help them to link the world together. Theoretically, each individual forms his/her opinion about the general issues and what is related to private life, but practically, if all the citizens read and studied the total of abstract information which orbits economy, politics and others – even the simplest topics, they would understand that it was impossible to reach any result whatever it was. Therefore, people voluntarily allow the governments and the hidden invisible people to manage and choose the information in order to highlight the most important problematic. We accepted that our leaders in addition to the journalists and media personnel who serve these leaders and their ideas impose on us what questions which are linked to public interest or welfare. They are the people who determine the

things that are of interest to the recipient masses (Bernays, 2007). The industrial capitalist system imposed a new formula of control. The capital owners or the special powers dominate the governments and, eventually, control and determine the public identity or opinion. Dominating the public awareness is quite important in order to entice people to practice behaviors which satisfy the propagandist. Propaganda is able to mobilize the power and the money. The business society is characterized by great influential power on the societies in which we live (Chomsky, 2002). The minority can influence the majority (Bernays, 2007).

Propaganda in dictator and democratic societies creates different forms of slavery, compulsory and voluntary or optional slavery. Ellul sees that there is no democracy without information but there is no information without propaganda. So, democracy is based on propagandas, and propaganda in itself is a negation of democracy (Troude-Chastenet, 2006; Ellul, 1990, 1957, 1952).

### **Factors that Ensure the Success, Efficiency and Power of the Influential Results of Propaganda**

Propaganda messages alone—away from their social, cultural, psychological, and technical surrounding—cannot strongly influence the targeted recipients. The collaboration of many factors ensures greater efficiency and increases the influential ability of propaganda (Taylor, 2000).

1. The monopoly of media guarantees the propagandists to control the contents of the messages directed to the masses, eventually they can transmit and reinforce the ideas and beliefs which serve their interests. Controlling the contents of images and texts draws the mental images which satisfy the desires of the propagandists into the mind of the recipient. Mental images are nothing but the result of these intellectual and informational products. The people adopt several images and characters which the media creates. The absence of opposition or counter propaganda facilitates accepting the published ideas by the people even if they were of one-sided direction (Lemieux, 2005; Andén, 2005; Svenbjörn, 1981).

2. Exploiting the contexts. The efficiency of propaganda increases in case the propagandist exploits the prevailing beliefs, the established trends and the deeply entrenched behavioral patterns. Propaganda should be put in stereotyped contexts which are already known by the targeted masses (Al-Dulaimi, 2004). Propaganda depends on and strengthens previously existing trends (Troude-Chastenet, 2006). In many cases, political, religious or social propagandas influence the people who already have a holistic or partial conviction in the subject of the propaganda. In other words, the influence of propaganda is related to the degree of the propaganda's ideas connection to the desires, feelings and interests of the recipient (Al-Dulaimi, 2011).

3. **Encirclement.** It means that the propagandist encircles the recipient with propaganda messages through employing more than a communication means and through discourse diversity; that is, all symbols and significances should be employed for the purpose of achieving a greater influence (Al-Assaf, 2012; Taylor, 2000). Encirclement can be called Total Propaganda (Ellul, 1973).

4. **Reinforcement.** This factor is related to personal communication. The propagandist resorts to this type of communication in order to reinforce the role of media in order to realize the propaganda goals. The face-to-face communication completes the work of the central propaganda system represented by the mass media or by discussions and conferences which are carried out in groups. The propagandist's direct personal communication with his/her followers or groups increases the degree of their being influenced by the discussed ideas and visions (Al-Dulaimi, 2004).

5. **The continuousness of propaganda.** Propaganda should be continuous non-stop for a period of time proportional to its nature. Pursuant to Ellul, continuity means giving no way to the recipients to contemplate or think, as they are subjugated to propaganda ideas all the day (Ellul, 1973).

One should attempt to keep the individuals in the margin; they should not be allowed to get together or to do any activity or interference in the social conflicts. One should attempt to keep the individuals as an immobile element, and if they moved, their movement should be to the advantage of the propagandist (Chomsky, 2002).

### **Propaganda's Technical Methods**

1. **Assertion:** it means introducing information in a vivid enthusiastic way without being necessarily true. No detailed explanation or a presentation of the background of the event is required; the piece of information is briefed but fairly acceptable without inciting or creating questions in the mind of the recipient. The propagandist may suggest an idea employing a short phrase such as "Our principles are the best" without presenting an evidence proving the validity of the slogan (Kommers, B.S., 2001; Linebarger, 1954).

2. **Repetition:** there is a close relationship between repetition and believing. Repeating phrases leads to believing them. Even lies can be believed when repeated. However, the propagandist should avoid boring repetition as it may cause a contrary result of the desired one (Al-Assaf, 2012; Al-Dulaimi, 2011; Hamza, 1987). Repetition is one of the methods of changing public opinion. It is a way of pressure on the masses targeted by the propaganda. Few ideas and much repetition realize the optimal goal. Moreover, repeating the same idea is preferred to be through new words and symbols so that the idea may not be formed in stereotyped words (Al-Abd, 2008; Yousef, 2004). In accordance with

Goebbels, the reason why the Catholic Church succeeded is repeating the same thing for a long time; therefore, propagandists should follow its example. Repetition also helps in persuasion (Nilsson & Österlund, 2014; Al-Ridha, 1998; Linebarger, 1954) .

3. **Exaggeration.** This method is employed in many types of propaganda such as commercial, political and religious. There is a relationship between the excess of exaggeration and the size of the propagandist rivals. The greater the rival is, the more exaggeration the propagandist needs in order to draw the attention of the recipient masses and to influence their ideas and consequently their decisions and behavior (Al-Assaf, 2012; Al-Dulaimi, 2011; Hamza, 1987).

4. **Name calling.** This type is used during war time and political confrontations. It depends on employing derogatory language or words with negative significances to describe the enemy and its actions. Propaganda seeks to create prejudices and nourish negative feelings towards the enemy through describing it, calling it names and likening it to things hated by the people. Mostly mockery is employed to realize this purpose (Linebarger, 1954).

5. **Glittering generalities.** It is noted in the field of political propaganda. It is vocabulary with positive significances which are associated in the mind of the individual to highly regarded values. Using these vocabulary items motivates the recipient to accept any idea without any reasoning because of the values and signifiers which each item has and which the recipient people would accept without any reservation. For instance, "Democracy" is a vocabulary item that has positive significance and suggests the desire of the people to be free and to practice freedom to the greatest possible degree. If it was used in a party's logo it would ensure a higher influential ability. "Honor, glory, love of country" are words which are used as glittering generalities. To avoid falling in the trap of ringing words, the recipient should look for the value of the idea regardless of the words used to explain the idea (Kommers, 2001; Linebarger, 1954).

6. **Reincarnation, Similarity, Imitation and Plain Folk.** Through this technique, the propagandist seeks to persuade the crowds that his viewpoints and ideas reflect those the common person has and that he/she works hard in favor of the citizens. This is realized in many ways some of which are: A-language selectiveness, messages are formulated in an easily understood language. Even dialects can be used if this realizes the goal (Linebarger, 1954). B- Familiarity and identification with the surrounding medium of the recipient of the propaganda. That is, the ideas of the propaganda are put in a context which includes details and events which the recipient lives with and understands as they belong to his own and his surrounding experience. C- Reincarnation of interests. This takes place when the propaganda includes similar experiences, fears and hopes of the recipient masses. This

method is sometimes considered one of the harshest and most quibbling methods because it exploits the worries and desires of the recipient in order to achieve the goal. Mostly, the individual becomes a victim whose innocence has been exploited as he/she rapidly believes this propaganda which has a direct relationship with his/her interests (Al-Assaf, 2012; Al-Dulaimi, 2011; Hamza, 1987).

7. **Recipient-credible testimonials.** The stronger the relation between the source and the recipient, the more the influence of propaganda becomes. For example, quoting the opinion of a clergyman or a politician who is considered a leader for the public opinion ensures the success of propaganda goals. Many people believe in things which they do not know about and which they did not gain from their own experience, but they accept the ideas only because they came from sources that are credible for them (Linebarger, 1954).

8. **Bandwagon.** Pursuant to the Institute for propaganda Analysis in 1938, bandwagon is considered one of the most prominent techniques of propaganda which is employed during war and peace times. Bandwagon is a call directed to the individual in order to join the crowds. This technique seeks to persuade the individual that an actor (the party, group ...) is the winner as the majority supports and joins this crowd. So long as many people believe and join this party, victory must be imperative; the party is strong and undefeatable. Man usually wants to belong to the victorious side. Modern propaganda has changed and one of its tasks is persuading the individual that so long as many people belong or support a certain party, this targeted individual has to join the crowd or he/she shall be excluded or alienated (Linebarger, 1954). The persuasion process is accomplished through a psychological unification process. When the recipient is in a crowd influenced by the people and the common language or even common priorities, propaganda ensures achieving a great influence on both levels of thought and behavior (Troude-Chastenet, 2006; Kommers, B.S., 2001).

9. **Simplification.** The simpler the message, the better the propagandist ensures that it is understood and the more influence it has on the largest possible number of recipients. Complexity causes boredom and reluctance to complete the message. Propaganda may take the form of brief slogans that are easy to be learnt and memorized, or it could be in the form of a short statement which has clear words. The combination of simple phrases and easy tunes (tuned slogans) increases the ability of propaganda to spread. Simplicity can be an adopted style even if propaganda is in very complicated political, economic, philosophical or religious fields (Al-Assaf, 2012; Al-Dulaimi, 2011). Simplification (Stereotyping) is important when the messages are directed to uneducated masses (Linebarger, 1954).

10. **Emotional enticement.** Nazist propaganda is considered one of the most prominent users of this method. Propaganda, for Hitler and Goebbels must depend on emotional enticement not on discussion and persuasion. Hitler used to believe that women form a big proportion of the masses, therefore the people's response is mostly more emotional than mental. Hitler believed that the memory of the masses is weak and that the individuals respond more to that who forcibly motivates them than to that who persuades them because repeated slogans motivate their emotions whereas mental evidence has much weaker influence. According to Chomsky, one of the methods of creating sympathy in war propaganda is concentrating on the victims who belong to the propagandist and eliminating any news concerning the opponent's victims (Foley, 2015; Andén, 2005).

11. **Euphemisms.** The propagandist uses this technique in order to calm the masses. She/he tries to present unpleasant events in a way that makes it more acceptable and palatable by the recipient through employing palliative and softened expressions. The propagandist may resort to vague and indirect expressions in order to soften an offensive, severe and hard idea. This technique is much employed in military discourse especially during wars (Linebarger, 1954).

12. **Method of diverting attention.** This method is adopted when it is difficult to oppose the prevailing opinion among the masses about a certain subject. Opposing the overwhelming public opinion would not give any result, so politicians or public opinion leaders resort to diverting the attention of the masses towards another subject which is of interest for the masses (Al-Dulaimi, 2011; Hamza, 1987).

13. **Lesser of two evils.** This technique is very much used during war in order to persuade people of the necessity to sacrifice or to justify the difficult decisions. The task of this technique is persuading people to accept an idea through presenting it as if it were the less violent choice or the solution of the least loss. It is always accompanied by blaming the enemy and portraying it as the basis of all current problems and chaos (Linebarger, 1954).

14. **Method of fabricating crises.** It is the method of exploiting some events and conditions to create a crisis which is able to influence the public opinion and motivate the masses to adopt a behavior that serves the desire of a certain country or party. Fabricating crises has many forms such as enticement to do acts of sabotage, fabricating false news that provoke chaos and instability in the society, launching terrorist acts, and destroying plants (Hamza, 1987; Khalil, 1982).



15. **Pinpointing the enemy.** This technique is employed during war time and political campaigns or discussions. It attempts to simplify the complicated situations through depicting an individual, a group or a country as the enemy (Linebarger, 1954).

16. **Method of inflicting terror and chaos.** The Nazist propaganda is considered excellent and skillful in exploiting man's motive and need of feeling safe. The Nazi propagandists sought to provoke fear and terror. According to Hitler, subjugating peoples to the leader's will may be accomplished through creating a situation of horror and chaos. He believed that whether propaganda is directed to the interior or exterior (for instance, the enemy's masses), inability of logical thinking, inconsistency of feelings, uncertainty, hesitation and horror are all factors that help to subjugate the masses to the desire and goals of the propagandist. Intimidating people against a foreign enemy or an ideology whose adopters want to control our minds in order to exploit the country's resources or for another purpose is considered an important approach (Chomsky, 2002). Many countries adopted the same approach. Western countries spread fear and terror among the people and intimidated them against the expected communist invasion. Demonizing the opponent is one of the important methods of ensuring the popular support (Nilsson&Österlund, 2014; Andén, 2005; Yousef, 2004; Khalil, 1982). Creating fears makes the propagandist skillful at showing herself/himself as the savior (Foley, 2015). This technique makes use of the survival instinct and the fear of annihilation to mobilize the people (Linebarger, 1954).

17. **Method of lying and misleading.** Chomsky (2002) sees that the propagandist is characterized by a big ability to lie. As for Goebbels, the basic skill of the art of propaganda is the ability to mix lying with truthfulness. The presented material should not be true but it should be believable. Lies are used to influence the emotions of both the friends and the enemies (Yousef, 2004).

Misleading can be applied by the method of "Selective Control"; selecting a part of the truth and omitting the other. *Card stacking*, or selective omission is a very effective technique on the recipient masses. Even if all the presented information were true, the seriousness lies in eliminating the other information which makes the truth blurred and not clear (Nilsson & Österlund, 2014; Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012; Linebarger, 1954).

Pursuant to Goebbels, truth is the biggest enemy of countries. During war, for instance, countries play with the ideas and feelings of people through obscuring or exposing the results of wars. In order to raise the morale, the government hides a lot of truths or presents them in a way that differs from reality. In order to increase the illusion of the recipient, the propagandist employs during the talk several techniques such as imperfect pronunciation, stuttering and limited vocabulary items (Linebarger, 1954).

18. **Rumors.** It is an unverified story that spreads in society. It allegedly has a certain happening (Drever, 1955). It is a believable case or a statement which is spread from a person to another without having any standards that control its credibility and correctness. It is a promotion of fabricated news which talks about unreal incidents depending on the style of magnification, exaggeration and deformation in order to ensure influencing the public opinion (Hilmi, 2005; Darwish, 1993).

Wars and the atmosphere of instability are considered important reasons of spreading rumors which are not subject to criteria of truthfulness, impartiality and objectivity (Schiller, 1986). When these rumors are used during war times, they work as a weapon of psychological war; as they provoke the emotions of the masses and confuse the ideas (Abu Al-Nil, 1986).

The speed of spreading the rumor is proportional to the importance of the event which it talks about and to the vague contexts which surround this event (Schiller, 1986). The importance and seriousness of rumors emerge from the psychological effects which they leave behind and from their ability to decide the result of wars most of the time. In many cases rumors spread in informal ways and from unknown sources then cause very serious effects on the levels of social behavior and conduct (Al-Juwair, 1995; Najati, 1960).

Certainly, the launcher of any rumor has a goal. However, the rumor could be trivial containing shallow unimportant stories on many levels. Nevertheless, it may take a space of the daily social dialogue. Rumors may also include tales and jokes. During its development, many changes happen to the rumor; the propagandist launches a rumor which later comes back distorted to her/him (Hilmi, 2005; Abu Al-Neel, 1986).

One of the characteristics of the rumor is that it includes part of the truth. This characteristic is considered a basic core for structuring and spreading the rumor in the mediums which suffer from violent intellectual suffocation and where the sources of true news are few. The reason for this is serving certain goals. The more information monopoly, the stronger the stagnation, and the more the street is intellectually and emotionally congested, the greater the influence of rumor will be.

The rumor may target local, regional and international societies or groups. The contents and goals of rumor also vary; they may be social, political, economic or martial (McLaurin, 1982; Najati, 1960).

### **Types of rumor**

Here are some types of rumor:

- **Rumors from the viewpoint of time**

**Impulsive rumor:** it spreads fast. The more the rumor is connected to subjects which simulate the fears or interests of the people, the faster it spreads and the more effective it is. For instance, the rumors related to catastrophes and wars, those which create strong emotions such as fear, anger, or the victorious feeling.

**Submerging rumor:** this type appears and disappears in certain periods of time according to circumstances and contexts. In other words, it floats for a length of time, then sinks and floats again and so on.

**Creeping rumor:** this grows slowly and spreads in a mysterious atmosphere (Hilmi, 2005; Al-Juwair, 1995; Darwish, 1993; Ghunaim, 1968).

- **Rumors from the viewpoint of subject**

**Rumors of hope, wishes and dreams.** They are associated with the desires and expectations of the groups whom these rumors are promoted among. The more they are associated with the needs of the targeted individuals, the faster they spread and stronger influence they have. Some people may believe them even if they doubt their credibility only because they need to satisfy their needs and realize their hopes. During wars, these rumors aim at reinforcing the people's confidence in victory and at encouraging the soldiers to fight. At the same time they aim at enticing the civilians to be patient, silent and steadfast (Mustafa, 2006; Al-Abd, 1993).

**Rumors of disappointment, hopelessness and fear.** This type exploits hard times such as wars. It also makes use of the psychological consequences resulting from the situations of fear and anxiety. Man is more vulnerable to believe and get affected by illusions and loses the ability to understand the events and incidents in a logical and regulated way. She/he is ready to believe everything she/ he hears especially when the rumor strongly addresses man's survival instinct (Mustafa, 2006; Ghunaim, 1968).

**Rumors of hatred and loyalty-shifting.** This type aims at mobilizing the individuals against a person, a group, a party or even a country. The more the rumors are linked to the interests and fears of the targeted masses, the more their rejection, hatred and disappointment against a certain actor increase (Mustafa, 2006).

**Strategies of confronting rumors:** confronting rumors is considered one of the forms of crisis management; many crises happen as a result of rumors. The most prominent strategies employed in confrontation are:

1- **Concentration strategy:** it means transmitting condensed messages through several mass media to the different groups on each patch of the places where the rumor spreads.

2- **The psychodynamic strategy:** it is based on the rules and theories of psychology. It concentrates on the relation between the individual's stimulus and response. The media message (stimulus) reaches the different dimensions of man,

biological, emotional and perceptive. It causes an influence which produces a reaction or a behavior (response). This strategy concentrates on realizing emotional appeals and motivating the perceptive activities of the individual in order to confront the rumor.

3- **The socio-cultural strategy:** this strategy takes into consideration that the individual's behavior is subject to societal pressures and controls. These systems control the societal reaction towards any media message. The adjustment of the social behavior requires the adjustment of the cultural and societal controls. If media could not modify the behavior, it should at least make use of the existing controls and put the media messages in contexts that simulate and harmonize with the prevailing cultural doctrines in order to achieve the desired influence on the targeted masses.

4- **The meaning construction strategy:** through this strategy, the propagandist seeks to adjust or create meanings for the symbols surrounding the targeted man. This means that the media influence must rise to the degree of creating societal and cultural patterns that serve the interests of the propagandist. Due to the influential power of the propaganda, several societies maintain and hold tightly false mental images about persons or events or practice their behaviors and attitudes on the basis of these images.

5- **The problematic situation strategy:** this strategy often employed in the case of crises and catastrophes. It is characterized in that it does not aim at achieving persuasion directly. Rather it provokes the masses to follow up the events and the analyses of the specialists so that mass media can pave the way to form the public opinion.

6- **The prevention strategy:** the strategies which confront rumors are characterized by being defensive; they are employed to retort to the spread of a certain rumor. However, the prevention strategy is based upon raising the awareness of the citizens before a crisis which might result in the spread of other rumors that are able to disturb security and create chaos takes place. Raising awareness may include explaining the concept of rumors, their causes and dangers (Mustafa, 2006; Yousef, 2004; Hijab, 2003).

### **The Basic Principles of Propaganda During War Time**

Pursuant to Anne Morelli (2001), there is a group of basic principles for propaganda during the time of war regardless of the identity of the propagandist. The most important of these principles are: **1-**We do not want war. The rulers of countries always assure that they do not want war but it is an obligatory situation. **2-** The opponent camp is the only one who is responsible for the war. The enemy launched the war and we have to retort. **3-** Demonizing the enemy. Propaganda influence is greater when the image of the enemy's leader turns into a symbol of horror and Satan.

Personifying the opponent is an important technique; the ability of the people to imagine or symbolize the enemy as a thing or a person magnifies the influential power of propaganda. A human group may not be able to abstractly hate the whole people; therefore, personification is necessary so that the hatred and rejection energy can be poured on a definite point. **4-**We defend noble causes; there are no individual interests. The propagandist cannot admit the real causes of war; so she/he employs the values that attract the recipient and make her/him justify any militant action. **5-** The enemy deliberately commits grievous acts. If we made mistakes, they would be unintentional. War is a conflict between civilization and barbarism. Our enemy practices brutality with no faith or legal deterrent. **6-**The enemy uses prohibited weapons. We respect the rules of war and fight honestly and with commitment to conventions. Yet the enemy does not. **7-** Our losses are very low, but those of the enemy are very enormous. **8-**The educated people and artists support our cause. **9-** Our cause has a holy characteristic. So, it has to be defended and fought for till death. **10-**Allthose who doubt our propaganda are traitors (Morelli, 2001).

In accordance with Elull, defining the true dimensions of propaganda requires studying it in the light of the contexts of civilization or of events. He also considers that the flaw or shortcoming that characterizes a lot of studies is attempting to study propaganda as an isolated phenomenon (Ellul, 1973).

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## **Chapter 5**

### **The Quantitative Analysis Results of the Studied Samples**

This chapter is specified for presenting the quantitative analysis results of the samples of the studied channels. Initially, the analysis results of each channel are presented apart. Then a graphic representation compares the rates of the total samples of both channels. The quantitative analysis is limited to brief explanations of the results since the qualitative analysis is the one which includes detailed treatment of the significances. For instance, the quantitative analysis is exclusive to demonstrating the repetitions and rates of the anti-government demonstrations but the qualitative analysis deals with all the signifiers related to this topic. In order to avoid repetition, I summarized the explanation in the quantitative analysis so as to make it limited to giving a panoramic image of the trend of channels as the qualitative analysis tackles the details of the mechanisms of the two channels in formulating the news content about the Syrian crisis.

## The Quantitative Analysis Results of Al-Jazeera Channel's Sample

The quantitative results are divided into the sample results of the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 in addition to the channel's total sample.

### 1- The Source Category

<b>Table 1</b>								
<b>Source Main Categories</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Channel Correspondents	0	0	8	3.17	11	2.68	19	1.9
Media	27	7.96	18	7.14	14	3.42	59	5.9
News Agencies	13	3.83	2	0.79	2	0.48	17	1.7
Official Reports & Data	14	4.12	15	5.95	19	4.64	48	4.8
Statements by Official Figures	24	7.07	18	7.14	8	1.95	50	5
Opposition Sources	223	65.78	148	58.73	333	81.41	704	70.4
Eyewitnesses	13	3.83	29	11.50	15	3.66	57	5.7
Archive	7	2.06	3	1.19	1	0.24	11	1.1
Unidentified Sources	18	5.30	11	4.36	6	1.46	35	3.5
Sum	339	100	252	100	409	100	1000	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	33.9%		25.2%		40.9%		100%	

Table No. 1 exhibits the repetitions and the rates of the Source Main Categories. The result shows that Al-Jazeera mainly depended on the sources of the opposition by 70.4% in the total sample. The opposition sources were the first reference of Al-Jazeera during the three studied years by 65.78% in 2011, 58.73% in 2012 and 81.41% in 2013.

The correspondents did not form a main source of news coverage for Al-Jazeera. Their rate, relative to the other sources, was only 1.9%. The media was Al-Jazeera's second source by 5.9% for the total sample. The dependence of Al-Jazeera on media which was at the rate of 7.96% in 2011 decreased to reach 3.42% in 2013. The rate of eye witnesses in the total sample was 5.7%. It was 3.83% in 2011 and 11.50% in 2012. It went down to 3.66% in 2013.

The Statements by Official Figures accounted for 5% in the total sample. In 2011, it was 7.07% and in 2012, it was 7.14% while it fell to 1.95% in 2013. This decrease reveals the channel's disregard for the official figures as actors in the events of the crisis.

Official Reports & Data constituted 4.8% of the total sample. The rates of this category converged for the samples of the three years; 4.12% in 2011, 5.95% in 2012 and 4.64% in 2013.

News Agencies Category was a source of Al-Jazeera's by a rate of 1.7% in the total sample. It was 3.83% in 2011 then decreased to 0.79% in 2012 and 0.48% in 2013. This may show Al-Jazeera's desire to present itself as a strong media entity whose ability to collect information is equal to that of press agencies.

The Archive represents only 1.1% in the total sample; 2.06% in 2011, 1.19% in 2012 and 0.24% in 2013. This makes Al-Jazeera's news seem up-to-date, live and direct.

The Unidentified Sources Category represents 3.5% of the total sample. It was 5.30% in 2011 and 4.36% in 2012 then declined to 1.46% in 2013.

### Source Subcategories

<b>Table 1 – 1</b>								
<b>Channel Correspondents</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Full Presence in The Report	0	0	8	100	11	100	19	100
Partial Presence in The Report	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sum	0	0	8	100	11	100	19	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	0%		42.10%		57.89%		100%	

Table No. 1-1 demonstrates the repetitions and rates of the category of the channel's reporters. The results reveal that the channel did not depend on the reporters as a source for its news in 2011; the rate of the reporters' category relative to the other sources is 0%. The channel attributes this to the censorship the Syrian state imposed on media. In 2012, the channel mainly depended on native Syrian amateur correspondents to cover the events on the ground. In 2013, some professional reporters started their field coverage of events, but the presence of the amateur correspondents was still overwhelming. Full Presence in the Report rated 100% in 2012 and 2013 while Partial Presence in the Report was null. This signifies that the channel dispenses with other sources when there is a reporter on the ground, or it reflects the channel's desire to emphasize on covering the events in one area only; where the reporter is available.

Table 1 – 2								
Media	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Syrian	25	92.59	18	100	11	78.57	54	91.52
Arab	0	0	0	0	1	7.14	1	1.69
International	2	7.40	0	0	2	14.28	4	6.77
Sum	27	100	18	100	14	100	59	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	45.76%		30.50%		23.72%		100%	

Table No. 1-2 is about the repetitions and rates of the Media Category. The Syrian media made up 91.52% in the total sample; 92.59% in 2011, 100% in 2012 and 78.57% in 2013. Most of the contexts in which Al-Jazeera used information from the Syrian media aimed at emphasizing the channel's credibility and at reporting the Syrian propaganda and discrediting it at the same time. The International Media accounted for 6.77% in the total sample; 7.40% in 2011, 0% in 2012 and 14.28% in 2013. Al-Jazeera mostly depended on the international media in the context of talking about international opinions and attitudes about what is going on. This media was not a source of reporting the events on the Syrian ground. This may show the channel's desire to marginalize the role of international media as a news source. Al-Jazeera did not depend on the Arab Media as an information source in 2011 and 2012. The rate of this media in the total sample is 1.69%. The channel only once recalled information from an Arab channel, which indicates Al-Jazeera's nearly absolute dispensing with Arab media reference.

Table 1 – 3								
News Agencies	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Syrian	1	7.69	2	100	2	100	5	29.41
Arab	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International	12	92.30	0	0	0	0	12	70.58
Sum	13	100	2	100	2	100	17	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	76.47%		11.76%		11.76%		100%	

Table No. 1-3 demonstrates the repetitions and rates of News Agencies. International Agencies constituted 70.58% of the total sample; 92.30% in 2011, but 0% in 2012 and 2013. Arab Agencies rated 0% for the three years. The Syrian Agencies made up 29.41% in the total sample; 7.69% in 2011, 100% in 2012 and 2013. The contexts in which the channel used information from the Syrian Arab News Agency mostly aimed at negating the Syrian government's propaganda or at showing a kind of media professionalism; covering the viewpoints of the different parties. The repetitions concerning the International News Agencies Category are only 17 out of 1000 sources.

This makes certain that Al-Jazeera desired to present itself as a media entity whose strength equals news agencies.

<b>Table 1 – 4</b>								
<b>Official Reports &amp; Data</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Syrian	6	42.85	3	20	4	21.05	13	27.08
Arab	1	7.14	0	0	0	0	1	2.08
International	7	50	12	80	15	78.94	34	70.83
Sum	14	100	15	100	19	100	48	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	29.16%		31.25%		39.58%		100%	

Table No. 1-4 exhibits the Official Reports & Data Category. The channel was mainly interested in international reports by 70.83% in the total sample: 50% in 2011, 80% in 2012 and 78.94% in 2013. The Syrian Reports constituted 27.08% in the total sample; 42.85% in 2011, 20% in 2012 and 21.05% in 2013. The Arab Reports made up only 2.08% in the total sample; 7.14% in 2011 and 0% in each of 2012 and 2013. Most of the contexts in which the reports were recalled were meant to emphasize the dictatorship of Assad and the suffering of the oppressed people.

<b>Table 1 – 5</b>								
<b>Statements by Official Figures</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Syrian	13	54.16	4	22.22	4	50	21	42
Arab	1	4.16	2	11.11	2	25	5	10
International	10	41.66	12	66.66	2	25	24	48
Sum	24	100	18	100	8	100	50	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	48%		36%		16%		100%	

Table No. 1-5 exhibits the repetitions and rates of the Statements by Official Figures. International Official Figures represented 48% in the total sample; 41.66% in 2011, 66.66% in 2012 and 25% in 2013. The Syrian Figures constituted 42% in the total sample; 54.16 in 2011, 22.22% in 2012 and 50% in 2013. The Arab Figures made up 10 % in the total sample; 4.16% in 2011, 11.11% in 2012 and 25% in 2013. The Syrian figures convey the Syrian propaganda while the international ones criticize and oppose the Syrian government. This gives an impression how the popularity of Assad is local and limited and how the opposition is, locally and internationally, popular and legal.

Table 1 – 6								
Opposition Sources	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Civilian Activists	99	44.39	78	52.70	59	17.71	236	33.52
Organisations & Coordination Committees	110	49.32	55	37.16	253	75.97	418	59.37
Political & Military Figures	14	6.27	15	10.13	21	6.30	50	7.10
Sum	223	100	148	100	333	100	704	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	31.67%		21.02%		47.30%		100%	

Table No. 1-6 demonstrates the repetitions and rates of the Opposition Source. Organisations & Coordination Committees accounted for 59.37% in the total sample; 49.32% in 2011, 37.16% in 2012 and 75.97% in 2013. Civilian Activists constituted 33.52% in the total sample; 44.39% in 2011, 52.70% in 2012 and 17.71% in 2013. Political & Military Figures, made up the least rate, 7.10% in the total sample; 6.27% in 2011, 10.13% in 2012 and 6.30% in 2013. The dependence of Al-Jazeera on Organisations & Coordination Committees and Civilian Activists more than Political & Military Figures helps to show the opposing movement against the Syrian government as a popular one more than it is one of figures and leaderships.

Table 1 – 7								
Eyewitnesses	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Identified	0	0	1	3.44	2	13.33	3	5.26
Unidentified	13	100	28	96.55	13	86.66	54	94.73
Sum	13	100	29	100	15	100	57	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	22.80%		50.87%		26.31%		100%	

This table deals with the repetitions and rates of the Eyewitnesses Category. The Unidentified Eyewitnesses made up 94.73% in the total sample; 100% in 2011, 96.55% in 2012 and 86.66% in 2013. The Identified Eyewitnesses accounted for 5.26% in the total sample; 0% in 2011, 3.44% in 2012 and 13.33% in 2013. This rate reflects Al-Jazeera's unwillingness to give special details about eyewitnesses or its carelessness about their identity. I argue that refraining from mentioning any information about eyewitnesses may help make each one a representative or a public speaker of the Syrian people. Mentioning information frames the identity of the eyewitnesses while refraining from that makes them public figures.



Table 1 – 8								
Archive	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Video	7	100	3	100	1	100	11	100
Photograph	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sum	7	100	3	100	1	100	11	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	63.63%		27.27%		9.09%		100%	

Table No.1-8 exhibits the repetitions and rates of the Archive Category. The channel depended on video footages by 100% for the three years. It did not use fixed photographs. This contributes to maintaining the liveliness of the news.

Table 1 – 9								
Unidentified Sources	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Media & News Agencies	3	16.66	0	0	0	0	3	8.57
Official Reports & Data	5	27.77	1	9.09	3	50	9	25.71
Official Personalities	10	55.55	10	90.90	3	50	23	65.71
Sum	18	100	11	100	6	100	35	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	51.42%		31.42%		17.14%		100%	

This table is concerned with the Unidentified Sources. Al-Jazeera, for example, would state: “Media reported” or “An official personality declared” without mentioning any more information about the source. Official Personalities Category accounted for the highest rate, by 65.71%, in the total sample; 55.55% in 2011, 90.90% in 2012 and 50% in 2013. Official Reports & Data constituted 25.71% in the total sample; 27.77% in 2011, 9.09% in 2012 and 50% in 2013. The rate of Media & News Agencies was 8.57% in the total sample; 16.66% in 2011, 0% in each of 2012 and 2013. Refraining from identifying the reference accurately or mentioning it in plural form such as “Agencies reported” may contribute to making the news seem true as many news agencies reported it – linking the diversity of the source to credibility. Keeping the reference anonymous may also let the recipient’s imagination free to identify the source.

## 2- The Source Orientation Category

<b>Table 2</b>								
<b>Source Trend</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Pro-Government	47	13.86	34	13.49	24	5.86	105	10.5
Anti-Government	290	85.54	207	82.14	377	92.17	874	87.4
Neutral	2	0.58	11	4.36	8	1.95	21	2.1
Sum	339	100	252	100	409	100	1000	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	33.9%		25.2%		40.9%		100%	

Table No. 2 shows the repetitions and rates of the Source Trend. The Anti-Government Trend accounted for 87.4% in the total sample. The Pro-Government one constituted 10.5%. The Neutral one made up only 2.1%. The anti-government trend was overwhelming in the three years by 85.54% in 2011, 82.14% in 2012 and 92.17% in 2013. Al-Jazeera recalled the pro-government trend in given contexts, the most prominent of which was disproving the government propaganda or displaying that the news content is balanced through including different viewpoints. The Neutral Trend sources represented 0.58% in 2011, 4.36% in 2012 and 1.95% in 2013.

## 3- The Topic Categories

<b>Table 3 – 1</b>								
<b>Public Movements</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Pro-Government	4	10.52	0	0	0	0	4	8
Anti-Government	34	89.47	10	100	2	100	46	92
Civilian Opposition Against Armed Opposition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sum	38	100	10	100	2	100	50	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	76%		20%		4%		100%	

Table No. 3-1 contains the repetitions and rates of the Public Movement Category. The Anti-Governments made up 92% in the total sample by 89.47% in 2011, 100% in each of 2012 and 2013. The Pro-Governments constituted 8% in the total sample by 10.52% in 2011, 0% in each of 2012 and 2013. The channel did not cover any movement of the Civilian Opposition Against Armed Opposition. Up to 2013, the opposition did not appear divided on Al-Jazeera screen.

<b>Table 3 – 2</b>								
<b>Activities by The Conflicting Armed Sides</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Regime's Activities	143	91.66	141	73.43	157	59.92	441	72.29
Armed Opposition's Activities	13	8.33	51	26.56	105	40.07	169	27.70
Sum	156	100	192	100	262	100	610	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	25.57%		31.47%		42.95%		100%	

Table No. 3-2 deals with the repetitions and rates of the category of Activities by The Conflicting Armed Sides. The Regime's Activities constituted 72.29% in the total sample by 91.66% in 2011, 73.43% in 2012, then decreased to 59.92% in 2013. But the Armed Opposition's Activities made up 27.70% in the total sample by 8.33% in 2011, 26.56% in 2012, then increased to 40.07% in 2013.

<b>Table 3 – 2 – 1</b>								
<b>Regime's Activities</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Against Civilians	131	91.60	123	87.23	109	69.42	363	82.31
Against Militants	12	8.39	18	12.76	48	30.57	78	17.68
Sum	143	100	141	100	157	100	441	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	32.42%		31.97%		35.60%		100%	

Table No. 3-2-1 contains the repetitions and rates of the Regime's Activities category. In the total sample, 82.31% of the activities were Against Civilians by 91.60% in 2011, 87.23% in 2012 and 69.42% in 2013. The activities Against Militants accounted for 17.68% in the total sample by 8.39% in 2011, 12.76% in 2012 and 30.57% in 2013. This selectivity helps make the crisis seem as a war held by an armed regime against unarmed people rather than against the armed parties. Most of the contexts which dealt with the regime's actions against the armed opposition were about clashes between the two parties; the Syrian army was not the only subject or dominant actor in the statements.

Table 3 – 2 – 2								
Armed Opposition's Activities	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Against Civilians	3	23.07	3	5.88	4	3.80	10	5.91
Against The Regime	10	76.92	48	94.11	101	96.19	159	94.08
Sum	13	100	51	100	105	100	169	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	7.69%		30.17%		62.13%		100%	

Table No. 3-2-2 includes the repetitions and rates of the Armed Opposition's Activities Category. The results demonstrate that 94.08% of the opposition's activities in the total sample were Against the Regime by 76.92% in 2011, 94.11% in 2012 and 96.19% in 2013. Opposition's Activities against Civilians made up 5.91% in the total sample by 23.07% in 2011, 5.88% in 2012 and 3.80% in 2013. Most of the news that included the armed opposition's activities against civilians were in contexts where the government's propaganda about armed people who destroy the country was recalled or Al-Jazeera often presented this propaganda in order to rebut it.

Table 3 – 3								
The Consequences of The Conflict Between The Regime & The Opposition	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Deaths	57	75	34	48.57	35	52.23	126	59.15
Wounded People	6	7.89	13	18.57	13	19.40	32	15.02
Displacement and Refuge	6	7.89	10	14.28	12	17.91	28	13.14
Economic and Services Situation	7	9.21	13	18.57	7	10.44	27	12.67
Sum	76	100	70	100	67	100	213	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	35.68%		32.86%		31.45%		100%	

Table No. 3-3 shows the repetitions and rates of the Consequences of the Conflict between the Regime & the Opposition Category. Al-Jazeera allocated the largest space for talking about the deaths. The Deaths Category accounted for 59.15% in the total sample by 75% in 2011, 48.57% in 2012 and 52.23% in 2013. The Wounded People Category was the second. Its rates were 15.02% in the total sample by 7.89% in 2011, 18.57% in 2012 and 19.40% in 2013. The third was the Displacement and Refuge Category which constituted 13.14% in the total sample by 7.89% in

2011, 14.28% in 2012 and 17.91% in 2013. The Economic and Services Situation Category had the least rate in the total sample by 12.67%; 9.21% in 2011, 18.57% in 2012 and 10.44% in 2013.

<b>Table 3 – 3 – 1</b>								
<b>Deaths</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Government's Deaths, Civilian & Military	7	12.28	2	5.88	3	8.57	12	9.52
Opposition's Deaths Civilian & Military	49	85.96	29	85.29	29	82.85	107	84.92
Other Party's Deaths	1	1.75	3	8.82	3	8.57	7	5.55
Sum	57	100	34	100	35	100	126	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	45.23%		26.98%		27.77%		100%	

Table No. 3-3-1 demonstrates the repetitions and rates of Deaths Category. The channel highlighted Opposition's Deaths, Civilian & Military, whose rate was 84.92% in the total sample by 85.96% in 2011, 85.29% in 2012, and 82.85% in 2013. This makes the opponents seem as victims; victimisation discourse. The Government's Deaths, Civilian & Military Category had the following rates: 9.52% in the total sample by 12.28% in 2011, 5.88% in 2012 and 8.57% in 2013. The Other Party's Deaths Category accounted for 5.55% in the total sample by 1.75% in 2011, 8.82% in 2012 (the channel did not identify the dead people; its discourse was general, only mentioning that there were murdered people) and 8.57% in 2013; these murdered people were from the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Iraqi Abu Al Fadl Al Abbas Brigade.

<b>Table 3 – 3 – 2</b>								
<b>Wounded People</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Government's Wounded People, Civilian & Military	0	0	1	7.69	1	7.69	2	6.25
Opposition's Wounded People, Civilian & Military	6	100	11	84.61	11	84.61	28	87.5
Other Party's Wounded People	0	0	1	7.69	1	7.69	2	6.25
Sum	6	100	13	100	13	100	32	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	18.75%		40.62%		40.62%		100%	

Table No. 3-3-2 deals with the repetitions and rates of Wounded People Category. Al-Jazeera underlined Opposition's Wounded People, Civilian & Military. This category accounted for 87.5% in the total sample; 100% in 2011, 84.61% in each of 2012 and 2013. The rates of Government's Wounded People, Civilian & Military Category were 6.25% in the total sample; 0% in 2011, 7.69% in 2012 and 7.69% in 2013. Similarly, the Other Party's Wounded People Category made up 6.25% in the total sample; 0% in 2011, 7.69% in 2012 (the channel did not identify the wounded people; its discourse was general, only mentioning that there were wounded people) and 7.69% in 2013; these wounded people were from the Hezbollah.

Table 3 – 3 – 3								
Displacement & Refuge	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Internal	2	33.33	5	50	6	50	13	46.42
Abroad	4	66.66	5	50	5	41.66	14	50
Unspecified	0	0	0	0	1	8.33	1	3.57
Sum	6	100	10	100	12	100	28	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	21.42%		35.71%		42.85%		100%	

Table No. 3-3-3 shows Displacement & Refuge Category. Extraterritorial Refuge constituted the following rates: 50% in the total sample, 66.66% in 2011, 50% in 2012 and 41.66% in 2013. Internal Displacement Category accounted for the following rates: 46.42% in the total sample, 33.33% in 2011, 50% in each of 2012 and 2013. Unspecified Displacement & Refuge was mentioned once in the news by 3.57% in the total sample, 0% in each of 2011 and 2012, and 8.33% in 2013. Al-Jazeera dealt with the topics of displacement and refuge in the same degree which indicates the equal importance of the situations of the displaced people inside the country and refugees abroad.

Table 3 – 3 – 4								
Economic & Services Situation	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Good	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bad	7	100	13	100	7	100	27	100
Sum	7	100	13	100	7	100	27	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	25.92%		48.14%		25.92%		100%	

Table No. 3-3-4 exhibits the repetitions and rates of Economic and Services Situation Category. Al-Jazeera presented the economic and services situation in Syria as bad by 100% throughout the three years. The channel adopted exaggeration as a propaganda means in order to influence the recipient.

#### 4- The Visual Content Category

<b>Table 4</b>								
<b>The Visual Content</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Video	40	86.95	44	83.01	48	84.21	132	84.61
Infographic	5	10.86	7	13.20	8	14.03	20	12.82
Photograph	1	2.17	2	3.77	1	1.75	4	2.56
Sum	46	100	53	100	57	100	156	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	29.48%		33.97%		36.53%		100%	

Table No. 4 is allocated to the Visual Content Category. The results show that the channel mainly depended on video footages by 84.61% in the total sample; 86.95% in 2011, 83.01% in 2012 and 84.21% in 2013. Second in degree was the Infographic Category by 12.82% in the total sample; 10.86% in 2011, 13.20% in 2012 and 14.03% in 2013. This means that Al-Jazeera somewhat depended on illustrative means in order to enrich the news elements. Photograph category makes up the least rate by 2.56% in the total sample; 2.17% in 2011, 3.77% in 2012 and 1.75% in 2013. Video footages help news to convey reality more than photographs and infographs. Addressing feelings rather than mind is one of the means of propaganda. Infographs and statistics do not affect the feelings of the recipient as strongly as video footages which contain actual scenes and shots which can entice and invoke the audience.

### 5- Displaying Voices Included in The Videos Category

Table 5								
Display The Voices That The Videos Contain	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Complete Display	37	92.5	37	77.08	41	85.41	115	84.55
Partial Display	3	7.5	7	14.58	7	14.58	17	12.5
Incidental Display & Muting the Voice	0	0	4	8.33	0	0	4	2.94
Sum	40	100	48	100	48	100	136	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	29.41%		35.29%		35.29%		100%	

Table No. 5 exposes the repetitions and rates of the category of Displaying the Voices That the Videos Contain. The Complete Display Category made up the following rates: 84.55% in the total sample; 92.5% in 2011, 77.08% in 2012 and 85.41% in 2013. Partial Display Category constituted the following rates: 12.5% in the total sample; 7.5% in 2011, 14.58% in 2012 and 2013. Incidental Display & Muting the Voice Category accounted for the least rates by 2.94% in the total sample; 0% in 2011, 8.33% in 2012 and 0% in 2013. Synchronization of image and sound makes the message more effective. When the audience sees images of bombardment and simultaneously listens to the sound of bombardment, they may be more influenced than seeing the images of bombardment without hearing to the sound of bombardment. I argue that this method is an important tool of exaggeration and agitation.

### 6- The Content Orientation Category

Table 6								
Content Trend	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Pro-Government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anti-Government	40	100	48	100	48	100	136	100
Neutral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sum	40	100	48	100	48	100	136	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	29.41%		35.29%		35.29%		100%	

Table No. 6 is specified for the repetitions and rates of Content Trend Category. The content of the news reports was Anti-Government by 100% throughout the three studied years. Al-Jazeera's attitude is 100% Anti-Government.



## The Quantitative Analysis Results of Al-Manar Channel's Sample

The quantitative results are divided into the sample results of the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 in addition to the channel's total sample.

### 1- The Source Category

<b>Table 1</b>								
<b>Source Main Categories</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Channel Correspondents	8	6.01	14	4.81	42	10.19	64	7.65
Media	23	17.29	57	19.58	38	9.22	118	14.11
News Agencies	15	11.27	24	8.24	19	4.61	58	6.93
Official Reports & Data	6	4.51	29	9.96	17	4.12	52	6.22
Statements by Official Figures	34	25.56	49	16.83	80	19.41	163	19.49
Opposition Sources	5	3.75	55	18.90	123	29.85	183	21.88
Eyewitnesses	40	30.07	54	18.55	77	18.68	171	20.45
Archive	1	0.75	2	0.68	3	0.72	6	0.71
Unidentified Sources	1	0.75	7	2.40	13	3.15	21	2.51
Sum	133	100	291	100	412	100	836	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	15.90%		34.80%		49.28%		100%	

Table No. 1 exhibits the repetitions and rates of the Source Main Categories. The opposition sources had the highest percentage by 21.88%. Adopting the opposition sources by Al-Manar increased gradually from 2011 to 2013 by 3.75% in 2011, 18.90% in 2012 and 29.85% in 2013. The purpose of most of the contexts where Al-Manar recalled information from the opposition sources was emphasizing the Syrian government's credibility concerning the criminality and brutality of the opposition, especially the armed one. This means proving the validity of the government's propaganda through recalling the account and the documents of the government's enemies.

Al-Manar, secondly, depended for its news on Eyewitnesses. The rates of this category are 20.45% in the total sample, 30.07% in 2011, 18.55% in 2012 and 18.68% in 2013. A lot of the interviews with eyewitnesses were not done directly by Al-Manar. They were rather via the Syrian government's channels. This gives the impression that Al-Manar is an extension of these channels. Depending on eyewitnesses can make the audience feel that the content of the news is real as people are the ones who explain what is going on. They formulate the content and express their

attitudes, pain, suffering and hopes. Their simple language can affect the viewer more than the media discourse which is formulated in standard Arabic and in a professional, and sometimes, desiccated way that fails to address the viewer's feelings.

Statements by Official Figures Category represented a rate of 19.49% in the total sample; 25.56% in 2011, 16.83% in 2012 and 19.41% in 2013. The fourth in rank was the Media Category by 14.11% in the total sample, 17.29% in 2011, 19.58% in 2012 and 9.22% in 2013. Although Al-Manar had reporters on the Syrian ground, the Channel Correspondents represented only 7.65% in the total sample, 6.01% in 2011, 4.81% in 2012 and 10.19% in 2013 because the correspondents increased the rate of their coverage of the government's military activities. Al-Manar depended on correspondents in definite contexts such as covering the demonstrations which supported the regime and some government activities which aimed at treating the results of the Syrian crisis. These contexts were often optimistic and defensive in the face of the Syrian opposition's propaganda.

The News Agencies Category made up the following rates: 6.93% in the total sample, 11.27% in 2011, 8.24% in 2012 and 4.61% in 2013. The rates of Official Reports & Data Category are: 6.22% in the total sample, 4.51% in 2011, 9.96% in 2012 and 4.12% in 2013. Next to this category is Unidentified Sources whose rates are as follows: 2.51% in the total sample, 0.75% in 2011, 2.40% in 2012 and 3.15% in 2013. The archive rates accounted for the least category by 0.71% in the total sample, 0.75% in 2011, 0.68% in 2012 and 0.72% in 2013. Al-Manar's reluctance to depend on the archive makes the coverage sound live, simultaneous and lively.

### Source Subcategories

Table 1 – 1								
Channel Correspondents	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Full Presence in The Report	5	62.5	8	57.14	29	69.04	42	65.62
Partial Presence in The Report	3	37.5	6	42.85	13	30.95	22	34.37
Sum	8	100	14	100	42	100	64	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	12.5%		21.87%		65.62%		100%	

This table deals with the repetitions and rates of the Channel Correspondents Category. The Full Presence in the Report was the highest by 65.62% in the total sample, 62.5% in 2011, 57.14% in 2012 and 69.04% in 2013. This means that when Al-Manar depended on the correspondents, they covered all the details mentioned in the report. Partial Presence in the Report category made up the following rates: 34.37% in the total sample, 37.5% in 2011, 42.85% in 2012 and 30.95% in

2013. This means that, although Al-Manar had correspondents in Syria, it depended on other sources to form the news structure.

<b>Table 1 – 2</b>								
<b>Media</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Syrian	12	52.17	47	82.45	27	71.05	86	72.88
Arab	7	30.43	2	3.50	9	23.68	18	15.25
International	4	17.39	8	14.03	2	5.26	14	11.86
Sum	23	100	57	100	38	100	118	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	19.49%		48.30%		32.20%		100%	

Table No. 1-2 demonstrates the repetitions and rates of Media Category where the Syrian media accounted for the highest rates by 72.88% in the total sample, 52.17% in 2011, 82.45% in 2012 and 71.05% in 2013. The contexts when Al-Manar recalled information from the Syrian media were mostly motivated by confirming that there was a conspiracy against Syria which again proves that Al-Manar is an extension of the Syrian government channels. Al-Manar depended on the Arab media by 15.25% in the total sample, 30.43% in 2011, 3.50% in 2012 and 23.68% in 2013. The international media constituted the least rate by 11.86% in the total sample, 17.39% in 2011, 14.03% in 2012 and 5.26% in 2013. Most of the contexts when Al-Manar recalled information from the international and Arab media aimed at confirming the government's propaganda about conspiracy and terrorism.

<b>Table 1 – 3</b>								
<b>News Agencies</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Syrian	14	93.33	17	70.83	6	31.57	37	63.79
Arab	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International	1	6.66	7	29.16	13	68.42	21	36.20
Sum	15	100	24	100	19	100	58	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	25.86%		41.37%		32.75%		100%	

This table demonstrates the repetitions and rates of the category of News Agencies. The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) made up the highest rate in the total sample by 63.79%, 93.33% in 2011, 70.83% in 2012 and 31.57% in 2013. Al-Manar depended on international agencies in contexts where the aim was mostly conforming the channel's credibility through exposing different viewpoints or with the aim of proving the validity of the government's propaganda

through presenting information that agrees with this propaganda. Al-Manar depended on the Arab agencies by 0% in all the years. In this way, Al-Manar marginalized the role of the Arab agencies and considered SANA as a main source which represents the government's propaganda while it considered the international agencies as a primary source in order to validate the credibility of the government's propaganda.

<b>Table 1 – 4</b>								
<b>Official Reports &amp; Data</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Syrian	5	83.33	15	51.72	10	58.82	30	57.69
Arab	0	0	2	6.89	0	0	2	3.84
International	1	16.66	12	41.37	7	41.17	20	38.46
Sum	6	100	29	100	17	100	52	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	11.53%		55.76%		32.69%		100%	

Table No. 1-4 shows the repetitions and rates of the category of Official Reports & Data. The Syrian sources made up the highest rates by 57.69% in the total sample, 83.33% in 2011, 51.72% in 2012 and 58.82% in 2013. The international sources constituted the following rates: 38.46% in the total sample, 16.66% in 2011, 41.37% in 2012 and 41.17% 2013. The Arab sources accounted only for 3.84% in the total sample, 0% in 2011, 6.89% in 2012 and 0% in 2013. This again shows that Al-Manar marginalized the role of the Arab sources.

<b>Table 1 – 5</b>								
<b>Statements by Official Figures</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Syrian	28	82.35	32	65.30	69	86.25	129	79.14
Arab	3	8.82	2	4.08	1	1.25	6	3.68
International	3	8.82	15	30.61	10	12.5	28	17.17
Sum	34	100	49	100	80	100	163	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	20.85%		30.06%		49.07%		100%	

This table contains the repetitions and rates of the category of Statements by Official Figures. Also in this category, the Syrian sources made up the foremost rates by 79.14% in the total sample, 82.35% in 2011, 65.30% in 2012 and 86.25% in 2013. The international figures represented the following rates: 17.17% in the total sample, 8.82% in 2011, 30.61% in 2012 and 12.5% in 2013. The Arab figures accounted only for 3.68% in the total sample, 8.82% in 2011, 4.08% in 2012 and 1.25% in 2013. This proves that the channel sidelined the Arab role.

Table 1 – 6								
Opposition Sources	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Civilian Activists	1	20	0	0	0	0	1	0.54
Organisations & Coordination Committees	0	0	46	83.63	104	84.55	150	81.96
Political & Military Figures	4	80	9	16.36	19	15.44	32	17.48
Sum	5	100	55	100	123	100	183	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	2.73%		30.05%		67.21%		100%	

Table No. 1-6 shows the repetitions and rates of the category of Opposition Sources. Al-Manar did not depend on Civilian Activists as a news source. This indicates the channel's desire not to admit the existence of peaceful opposition. This category accounted only for 0.54% in the total sample, 20% in 2011 and 0% in 2012 and 2013. Organisations & Coordination Committees made up the highest rate in the total sample by 81.96%, 0% in 2011, 83.63% in 2012 and 84.55% in 2013. Most of the contexts in which these sources were recalled aimed at emphasizing the criminality and brutality of the armed opposition. Political & Military Figures constituted the following rates: 17.48% in the total sample, 80% in 2011, 16.36% in 2012 and 15.44% in 2013. Al-Manar recalled the statements of these figures in several contexts the most prominent of which are: disparaging them and their role, showing the opposition as an unorganized movement and showing the leaders as outlaws and tools employed by the countries which are enemies of Syria.

Table 1 – 7								
Eyewitnesses	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Identified	4	10	2	3.70	11	14.28	17	9.94
Unidentified	36	90	52	96.29	66	85.71	154	90.05
Sum	40	100	54	100	77	100	171	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	23.39%		31.57%		45.02%		100%	

This table contains the repetitions and rates of the category of Eyewitnesses. Results exhibit that the channel was often uninterested in giving information about the eyewitnesses; the Unidentified Eyewitnesses Category represented the following rates: 90.05% in the total sample, 90% in 2011, 96.29% in 2012 and 85.71% in 2013. Identified Eyewitnesses Category made up 9.94% in the total sample, 10% in 2011, 3.70% in 2012 and 14.28% in 2013. I argue that refraining

from mentioning information about the eyewitnesses may help make each one of them a public representative and spokesman of the Syrian people. Mentioning the information frames the identity of the eyewitness while avoiding that makes the eyewitness a public figure.

<b>Table 1 – 8</b>								
<b>Archive</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion In The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Video	1	100	2	100	3	100	6	100
Photograph	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sum	1	100	2	100	3	100	6	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	16.66%		33.33%		50%		100%	

This table demonstrates the repetitions and rates of the category of Archive. Al-Manar used the video footages by 100% throughout the three studied years and did not use photos from the archive. This maintains the vitality of the news.

<b>Table 1 – 9</b>								
<b>Unidentified Sources</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Media & News Agencies	1	100	4	57.14	8	61.53	13	61.90
Official Reports & Data	0	0	3	42.85	4	30.76	7	33.33
Official Personalities	0	0	0	0	1	7.69	1	4.76
Sum	1	100	7	100	13	100	21	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	4.76%		33.33%		61.90%		100%	

Table No. 1-9 shows the repetitions and rates of the category of Unidentified Sources. For example, Al-Manar would say: “Media stated”, “An official declared” or it would say: “According to reports” without giving any other information about them. Media & News Agencies accounted for the highest rates by 61.90% for the total sample, 100% in 2011, 57.14% in 2012 and 61.53% in 2013. Next is the Official Reports & Data Category where the rates are as follows: 33.33% in the total sample, 0% in 2011, 42.85% in 2012 and 30.76% in 2013. The category of Official Personalities represented the least rates by 4.76% in the total sample, 0% in 2011 and 2012 and 7.69% in 2013. Not mentioning the source in an accurate way or mentioning it in the plural form such as “Agencies stated” may contribute to making the news real because several news agencies

or reports mentioned it. Not identifying the reference might also make the recipient free to imagine the identity of the source.

## 2- The Source Orientation Category

<b>Table 2</b>								
<b>Source Trend</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Pro-Government	111	83.45	197	67.69	242	58.73	550	65.78
Anti-Government	14	10.52	72	24.74	144	34.95	230	27.51
Neutral	8	6.01	22	7.56	26	6.31	56	6.69
Sum	133	100	291	100	412	100	836	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	15.90%		34.80%		49.28%		100%	

Table No. 2 exhibits the repetitions and rates of the category of Source Trend. The general orientation of most of the sources is the Pro-Government by 65.78% in the total sample, 83.45% in 2011, 67.69% in 2012 and 58.73% in 2013. The Anti-Government sources accounted for the 27.51% in the total sample, 10.52% in 2011, 24.74% in 2012 and 34.95% in 2013. The contexts where the Anti-Government sources were mentioned often aimed at stressing the credibility of the Syrian government's propaganda. The Neutral Sources Category represented the following rates: 6.69% in the total sample, 6.01% in 2011, 7.56% in 2012 and 6.31% in 2013. This indicates that the role of the neutral sources in the context of propaganda is unimportant for Al-Manar and is not considered an effective weapon equal to the strength of the role of opposition sources.

## 3- The Topic Categories

<b>Table 3 – 1</b>								
<b>Public Movements</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Pro-Government	8	100	3	60	2	40	13	72.22
Anti-Government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Civilian Opposition Against Armed Opposition	0	0	2	40	3	60	5	27.77
Sum	8	100	5	100	5	100	18	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	44.44%		27.77%		27.77%		100%	

Table No. 3-1 includes the repetitions and rates of the category of Public Movements. Al-Manar stressed the pro-government and pro-Assad processions which made up 72.22% in the total sample, 100% in 2011, 60% in 2012 and 40% in 2013. It also highlighted the movements of the Civilian Opposition Against Armed Opposition by 27.77% in the total sample, 0% in 2011, 40% in 2012 and 60% in 2013. This points out the desire of Al-Manar to show the opposition as belligerent and divided groups. The rates of the Anti-Government movements were 0% during the three studied years. Al-Manar completely denied the existence of a popular peaceful movement against the government and the president Assad. Denial would be considered a defensive technique in psychological war.

<b>Table 3 – 2</b>								
<b>Activities by The Conflicting Armed Sides</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Regime's Activities	21	25.30	82	35.34	96	36.78	199	34.54
Armed Opposition's Activities	62	74.69	150	64.65	165	63.21	377	65.45
Sum	83	100	232	100	261	100	576	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	14.40%		40.27%		45.31%		100%	

Table No. 3-2 shows the repetitions and rates of the Activities by The Conflicting Armed Sides. The category of Armed Opposition's Activities accounted for the highest rates by 65.45% in the total sample, 74.69% in 2011, 64.65% in 2012 and 63.21% in 2013. The Regime's Activities Category constituted the least rates by 34.54% in the total sample, 25.30% in 2011, 35.34% in 2012 and 36.78% in 2013. This selectivity helps legalize the military reactions of the Syrian government as highlighting the actions of the armed groups helps to justify the government's military actions so that the Syrian army seems facing armed gangs not peaceful opposition.

<b>Table 3 – 2 – 1</b>								
<b>Regime Activities</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Against Civilians	0	0	0	0	1	1.04	1	0.50
Against Militants	21	100	82	100	95	98.95	198	99.49
Sum	21	100	82	100	96	100	199	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	10.55%		41.20%		48.24%		100%	

Table No. 3-2-1 demonstrates the repetitions and rates of the Regime's Activities Category. Al-Manar presented the Syrian government's military actions as ones only against armed gangs



by the following rates: 99.49% in the total sample, 100% in 2011, 100% in 2012 and 98.95% in 2013. Al-Manar only once mentioned an action of the government's army against the civilians but the context in which this information was mentioned was reported by opponents of Assad and the motif behind it was disproving the opposition's propaganda.

<b>Table 3 – 2 – 2</b>								
<b>Armed Opposition's Activities</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Against Civilians	31	50	111	74	140	84.84	282	74.80
Against The Regime	31	50	39	26	25	15.15	95	25.19
Sum	62	100	150	100	165	100	377	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	16.44%		39.78%		43.76%		100%	

Table No.3-2-2 demonstrates the repetitions and rates of the Armed Opposition's Activities Category. The Against Civilians Category accounted for the highest rates by 74.80% in the total sample, 50% in 2011, 74% in 2012 and 84.84% in 2013. The Against the Regime Category made up the least rates by 25.19% in the total sample, 50% in 2011, 26% in 2012 and 15.15% in 2013. This selectivity negates the popularity of the opposition and shows the armed people as enemies of the people. The contexts in which Al-Manar dealt with the activities of the armed opposition against the regime aimed at showing the government's soldiers as victims of the armed people's assaults or at talking about clashes between the government and the armed people and eventually at justifying all the military acts of the government's army.

<b>Table 3 – 3</b>								
<b>The Consequences of The Conflict Between The Regime &amp; The Opposition</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Deaths	31	60.78	61	77.21	69	74.19	161	72.19
Wounded People	16	31.37	13	16.45	12	12.90	41	18.38
Displacement and Refuge	2	3.92	2	2.53	4	4.30	8	3.58
Economic and Services Situation	2	3.92	3	3.79	8	8.60	13	5.82
Sum	51	100	79	100	93	100	223	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	22.86%		35.42%		41.70%		100%	

Table No. 3-3 presents the repetitions and rates of the Consequences of the Conflict between the Regime & the Opposition. The Death Category constituted the highest rates by 72.19% in the total sample, 60.78% in 2011, 77.21% in 2012 and 74.19% in 2013. Secondly, Al-Manar stressed the Wounded People. The rates of this Category were 18.38% in the total sample, 31.37% in 2011, 16.45% in 2012 and 12.90% in 2013. Economic and Services Situation Category made up the following rates: 5.82% in the total sample, 3.92 in 2011, 3.79% in 2012 and 8.60% in 2013. The rates of the Displacement and Refuge Category were the least by 3.58% in the total sample, 3.92% in 2011, 2.53% in 2012 and 4.30% in 2013.

<b>Table 3 – 3 – 1</b>								
<b>Deaths</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Government's Deaths, Civilian & Military	23	74.19	36	59.01	33	47.82	92	57.14
Opposition's Deaths, Civilian & Military	8	25.80	25	40.98	34	49.27	67	41.61
Other Party's Deaths	0	0	0	0	2	2.89	2	1.24
Sum	31	100	61	100	69	100	161	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	19.25%		37.88%		42.85%		100%	

Table No. 3-3-1 shows the repetitions and rates of the Deaths Category. Government's Deaths, Civilian & Military had the highest rates by 57.14% in the total sample, 74.19% in 2011, 59.01% in 2012 and 47.82% in 2013. This indicates the desire of Al-Manar to present the government and its civilian and military supporters as victims; victimization discourse. However, the rates of the Opposition's Deaths Civilian & Military Category were high by 41.61% in the total sample, 25.80% in 2011, 40.98% in 2012 and 49.27% in 2013. The contexts in which Al-Manar highlighted the opposition's deaths often aimed either at proving the existence of armed people and eventually emphasizing the credibility of the Syrian government's propaganda about the truth that it was fighting armed groups or at raising the morale and proving that the government's army was militarily superior; heroism discourse. The Other Party's Deaths Category constituted 1.24% in the total sample, 0% in 2011, and 2012 and 2.89% in 2013. Some of these dead people were opponents murdered by other opponents, which signifies the weakness of the opposition, others were Kurds fighting against the armed opposition.

Table 3 – 3 – 2								
Wounded People	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Government's Wounded People, Civilian & Military	11	68.75	10	76.92	6	50	27	65.85
Opposition's Wounded People, Civilian & Military	5	31.25	2	15.38	6	50	13	31.70
Other Party's Wounded People	0	0	1	7.69	0	0	1	2.43
Sum	16	100	13	100	12	100	41	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	39.02%		31.70%		29.26%		100%	

Table No. 3-3-2 deals with the repetitions and rates of the Wounded People Category. Al-Manar mainly highlighted the Government's Wounded People, Civilian & Military by the following rates: 65.85% in the total sample, 68.75% in 2011, 76.92% in 2012 and 50% in 2013. The Opposition's Wounded People, Civilian & Military Category included the following rates: 31.70% in the total sample, 31.25% in 2011, 15.38% in 2012 and 50% in 2013. The Other Party's Wounded People Category accounted for the least rates by 2.43% in the total sample, 0% in 2011, 7.69% in 2012 and 0% in 2013. These wounded people were Kuwaiti officers who participated in the Arab League's Observer Mission who came to Syria to study the field situation and to present reports about what was going on in Syria and about the opinions of the people.

Table 3 – 3 – 3								
Displacement & Refuge	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Internal	0	0	2	100	2	50	4	50
Abroad	2	100	0	0	2	50	4	50
Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sum	2	100	2	100	4	100	8	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	25%		25%		50%		100%	

Table No. 3-3-3 exhibits the repetitions and rates of Displacement & Refuge Category. The rates of internal displacement were: 50% in the total sample, 0% in 2011, 100% in 2012 and 50% in 2013. The rates of external refuge were as follows: 50% in the total sample, 100% in 2011, 0% in 2012 and 50% in 2013. The rate of Unspecified Displacement & Refuge Category was 0% in the three years; Al-Manar always mentioned the displacement and refuge areas. The contexts in

which Al-Manar talked about displacement and refuge are going to be studied in detail in the qualitative analysis of Al-Manar's sample.

Table 3 – 3 – 4								
Economic & Services Situation	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Good	2	100	3	100	2	25	7	53.84
Medium	0	0	0	0	3	37.5	3	23.07
Bad	0	0	0	0	3	37.5	3	23.07
Sum	2	100	3	100	8	100	13	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	15.38%		23.07%		61.53%		100%	

Table No. 3-3-4 includes the repetitions and rates of Economic and Services Situation Category. In 2011 and 2012, Al-Manar presented the situation in Syria as 100% Good. In 2013 the results changed so that the Good Category became 25%. The Medium Category made up 37.5%. The same applies to the Bad Category by 37.5%. The rates of the categories were Good by 53.84%, Medium by 23.07% and Bad by 23.07%. Al-Manar attempted to alleviate the effects of the events and the news on the recipients through resorting to the technique of euphemism.

#### 4- The Visual Content Category

Table 4								
Visual Content	2011		2012		2013		The Proportion in The Whole Sample	
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
Video	10	76.92	30	75	71	68.26	111	70.70
Infographic	2	15.38	9	22.5	23	22.11	34	21.65
Photograph	1	7.69	1	2.5	10	9.61	12	7.64
Sum	13	100	40	100	104	100	157	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	8.28%		25.47%		66.24%		100%	

Table No. 4 is specified for the Visual Content Category. Al-Manar majorly depended on videos by 70.70% in the total sample, 76.92% in 2011, 75% in 2012 and 68.26% in 2013. The channel also used Infographic to build the news content. The rates of this category were 21.65% in the total sample, 15.38% in 2011, 22.5% in 2012 and 22.11% in 2013. The Photograph Category constituted 7.64% in the total sample, 7.69% in 2011, 2.5% in 2012 and 9.61 % in 2013. Videos make the news more realistic than photographs and infographic. One of the propaganda's techniques is addressing the feelings more than the mind. Infographic and statistics do not affect

the feelings of the recipient as strongly as the videos which contain scenes and shots taken from reality and able to entice and motivate the recipient.

### 5- Displaying Voices Included in The Videos Category

<b>Table 5</b>								
<b>Display The Voices That The Videos Contain</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Complete Display	2	20	4	12.90	3	4.22	9	8.03
Partial Display	1	10	11	35.48	12	16.90	24	21.42
Incidental Display & Muting the Voice	7	70	16	51.61	56	78.87	79	70.53
Sum	10	100	31	100	71	100	112	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	8.92%		27.67%		63.39%		100%	

Table No. 5 exposes the repetitions and rates of the category of Displaying Voices Included in the Videos. The Incidental Display & Muting the Voice Category made up the highest rates by 70.53% in the total sample, 70% in 2011, 51.61% in 2012 and 78.87% in 2013. This indicates the desire of Al-Manar to alleviate the effects of the news on the recipient; Euphemism Technique. The Partial Display category constituted the following rates: 21.42% in the total sample, 10% in 2011, 35.48% in 2012 and 16.90% in 2013. The Complete Display Category represented the least rates by 8.03% in the total sample, 20% in 2011, 12.90% in 2012 and 4.22% in 2013. Most of the contexts in which Al-Manar depended on Complete Display were those which support the government's propaganda such as showing processions supporting Assad in sound and image, displaying the assaults held by the armed opposition against the pro-government civilians and military personnel, or presenting the government military acts, audio and video where the army seems confident of victory, advancing or superior to the opposition.

**6- The Content Orientation Category**

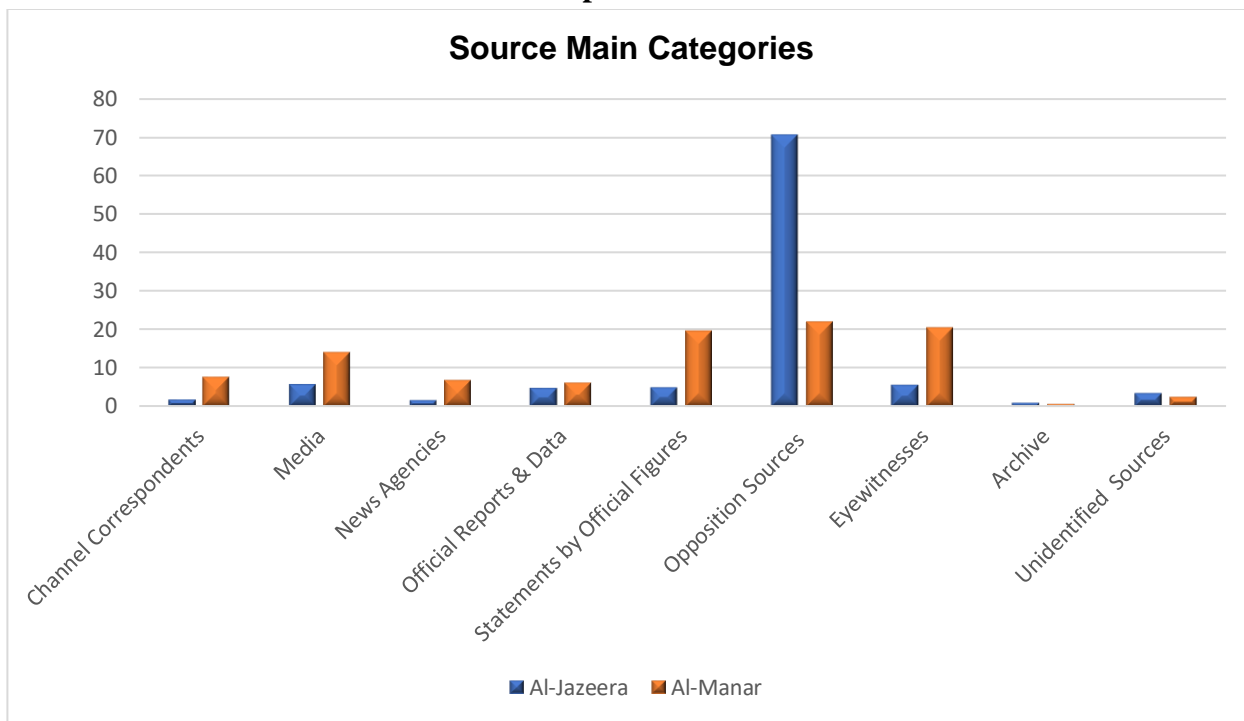
<b>Table 6</b>								
<b>Content Trend</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>The Proportion in The Whole Sample</b>	
	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fre</b>	<b>%</b>
Pro-Government	26	100	43	100	71	100	140	100
Anti- Government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sum	26	100	43	100	71	100	140	100
The Whole Proportion of The Category	18.57%		30.71%		50.71%		100%	

Table No. 6 is specified for the repetitions and rates of the Content Trend category. The content of the news reports was 100% pro-government during the three studied years. Al- Manar's attitude is 100% pro-government.

## Graphical Representation of the Analysis Results of the Whole Samples of the Two Channels

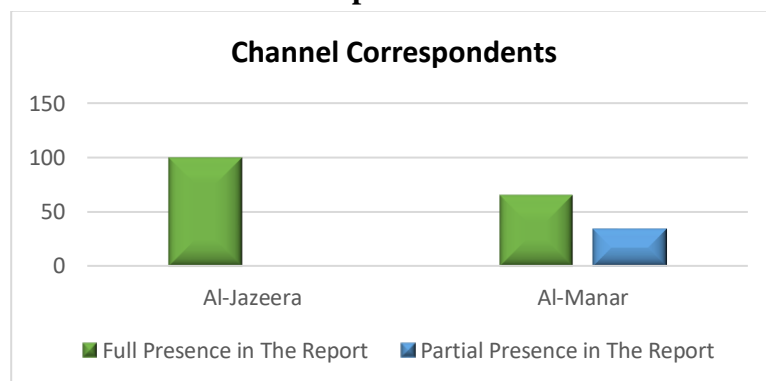
### 1- Source Categories

Graphic N.1

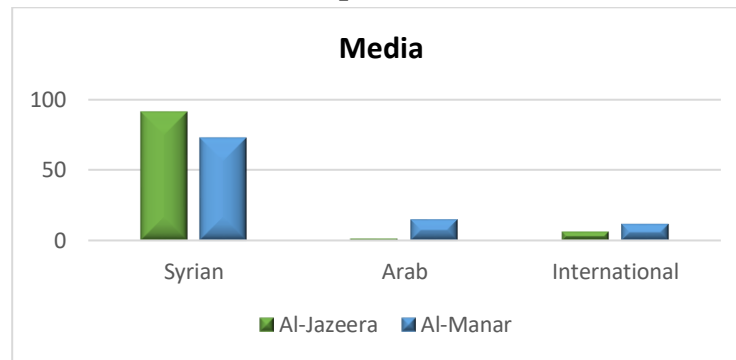


### Source Subcategories

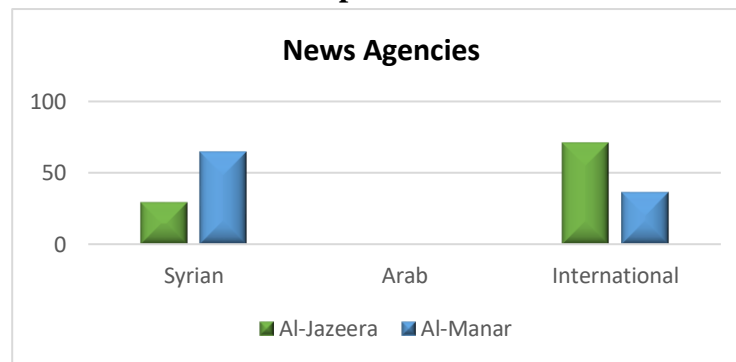
Graphic N.1-1



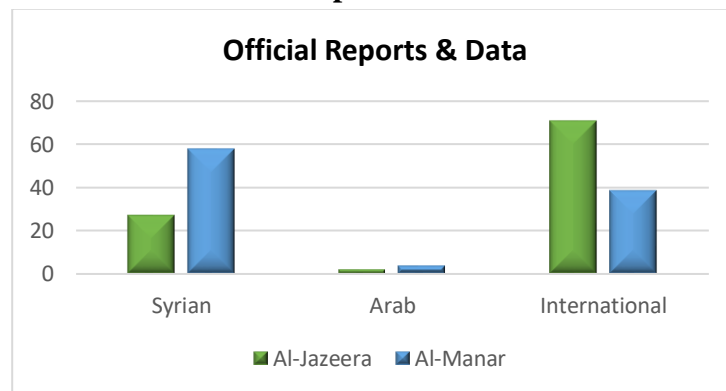
**Graphic N.1-2**



**Graphic N.1-3**

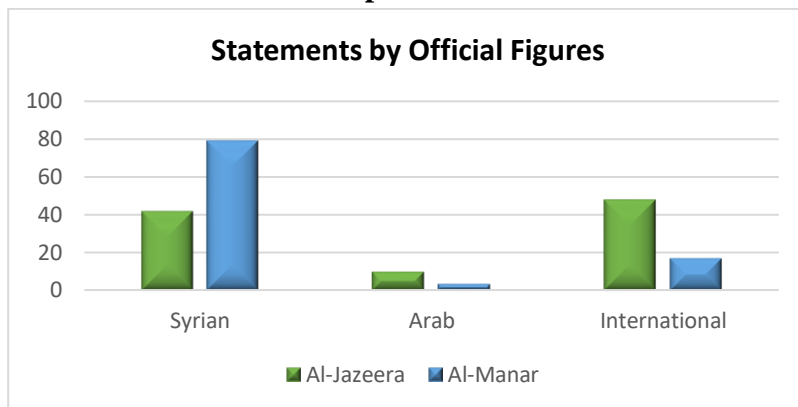


**Graphic N.1-4**





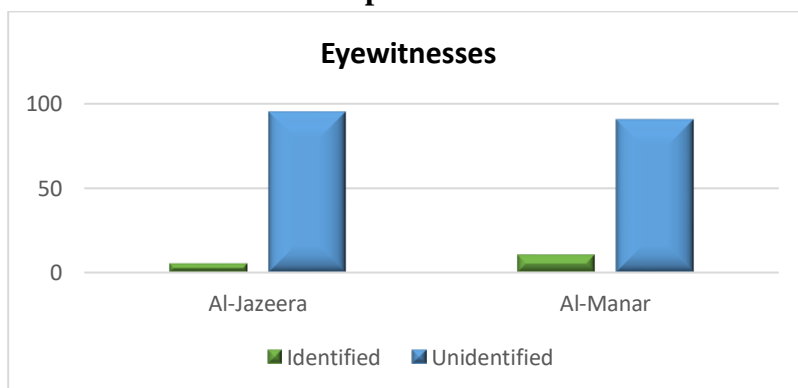
**Graphic N.1-5**



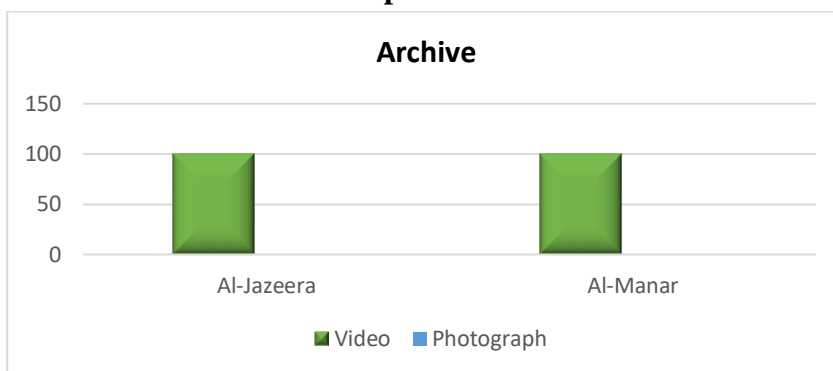
**Graphic N.1-6**



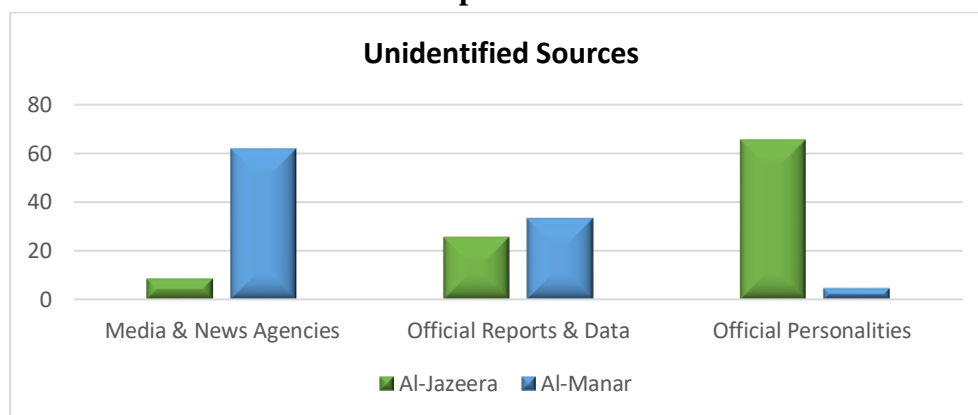
**Graphic N.1-7**



**Graphic N.1-8**

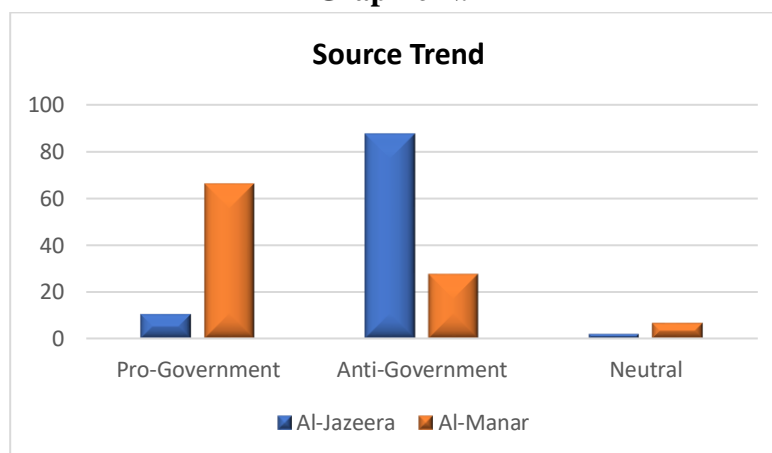


**Graphic N.1-9**



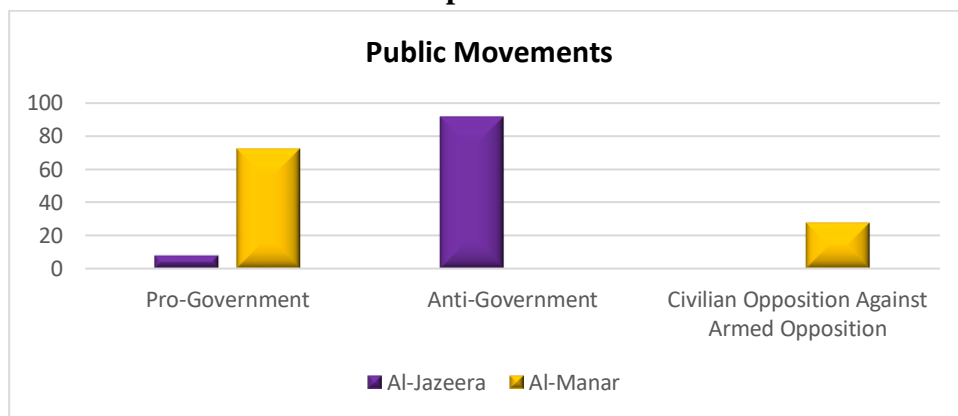
## 2- The Source Orientation Category

**Graphic N.2**

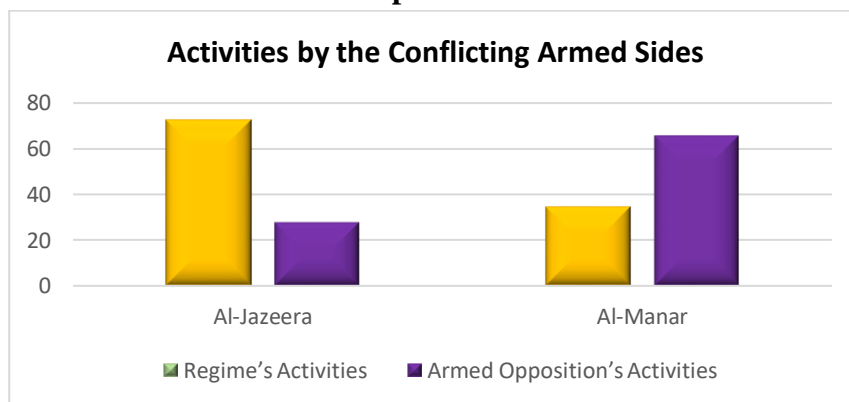


### 3- The Topic Categories

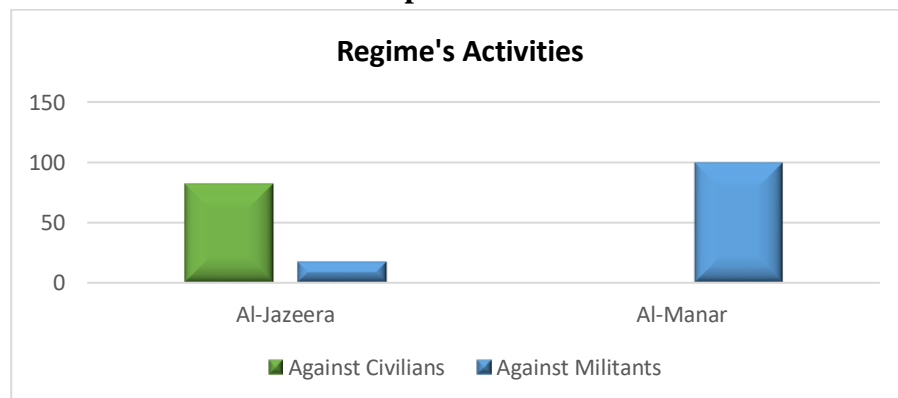
**Graphic N.3-1**



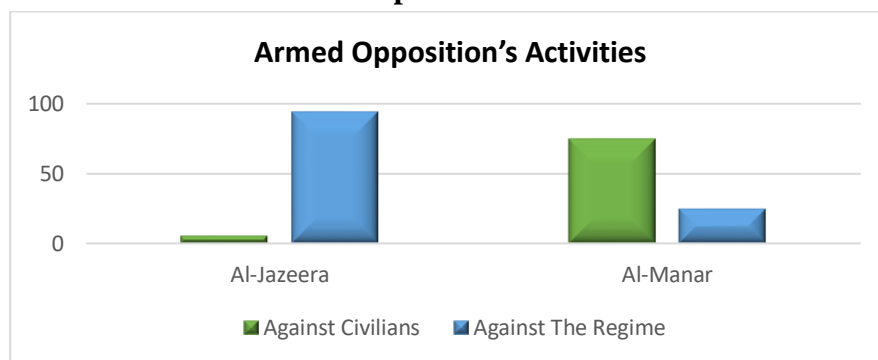
**Graphic N.3-2**



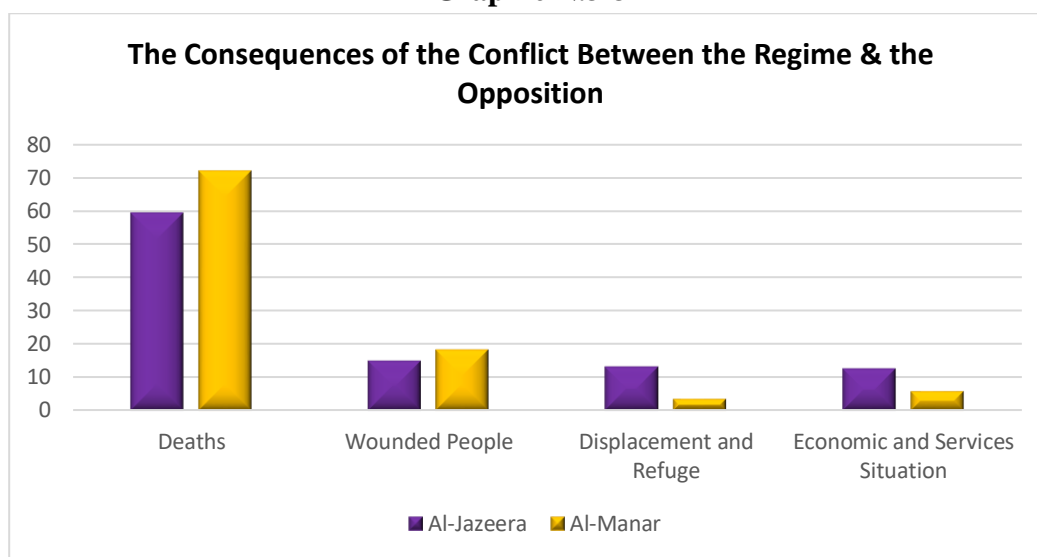
**Graphic N.3-2-1**



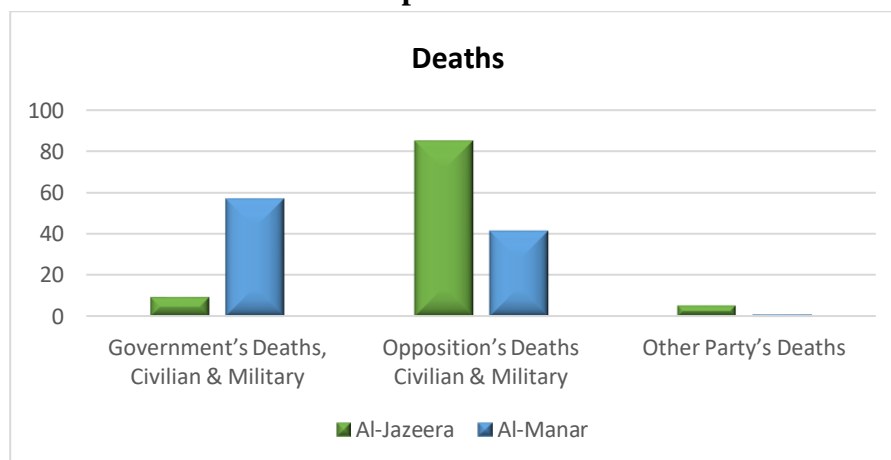
**Graphic N.3-2-2**



**Graphic N.3-3**



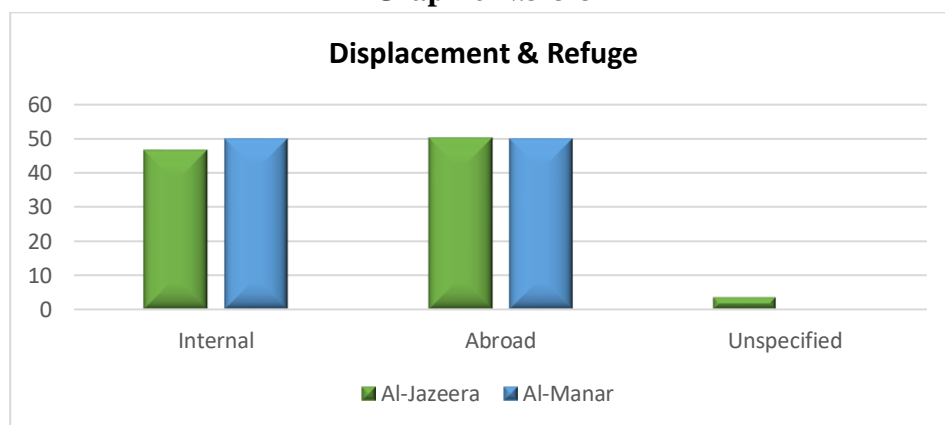
**Graphic N.3-3-1**



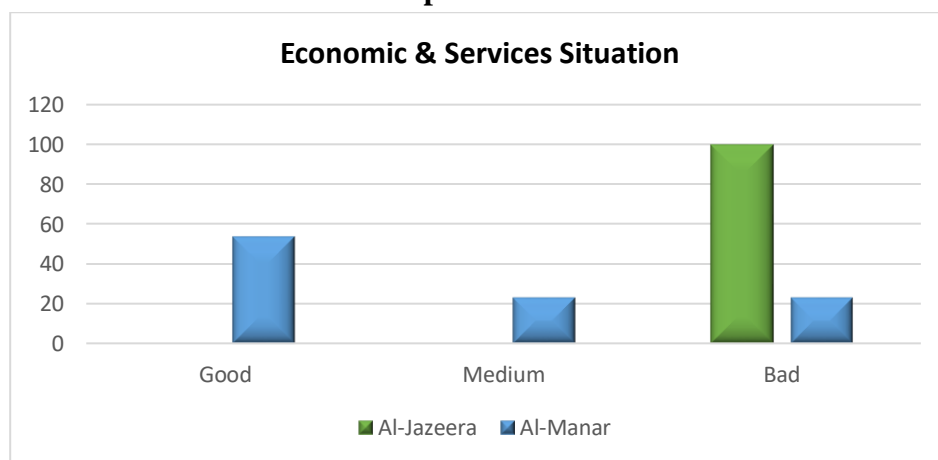
**Graphic N.3-3-2**



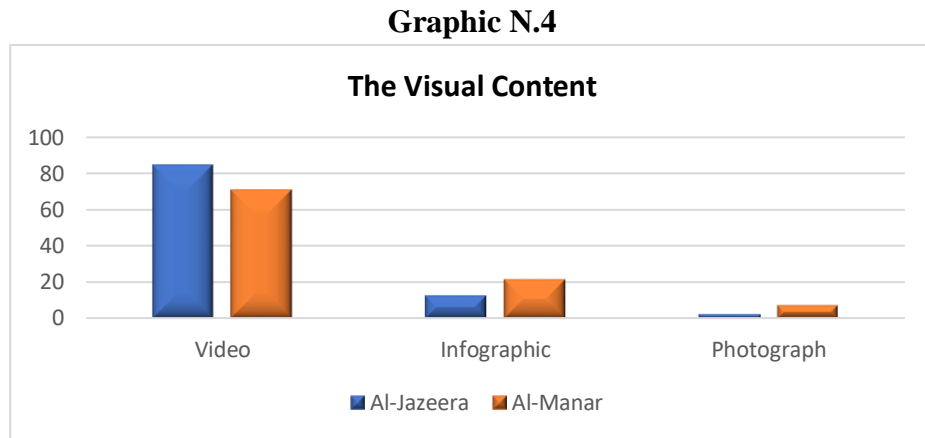
**Graphic N.3-3-3**



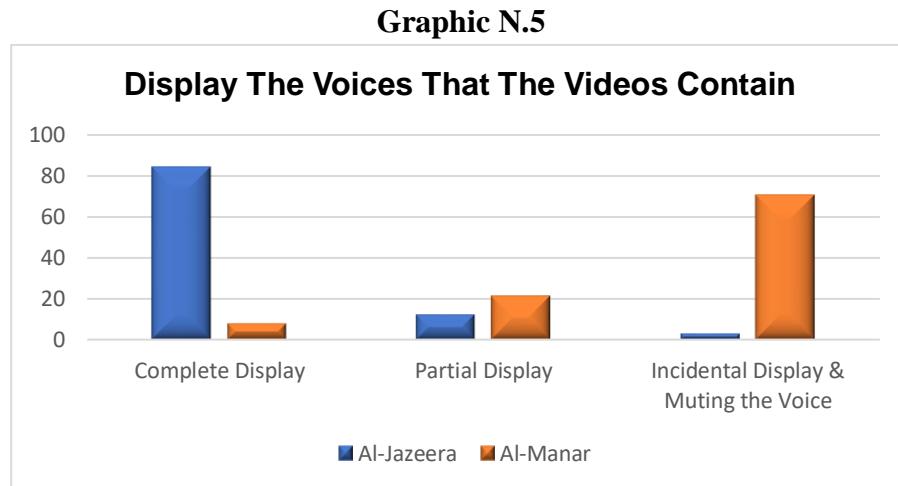
**Graphic N.3-3-4**



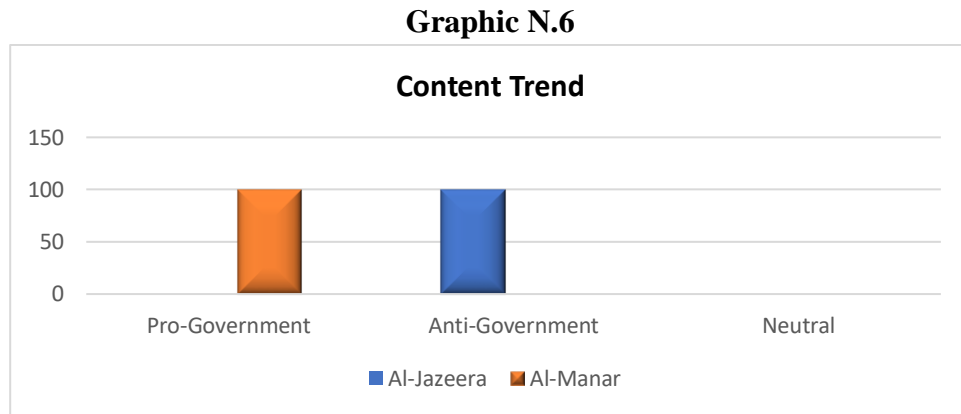
#### 4 – The Visual Content Category



#### 5 – Displaying Voices Included in The Videos Category



## 6 – The Content Orientation Category



## Chapter 6

### **Semiotic Analysis of Al-Jazeera Channel's Sample**

The verbal and non-verbal signifiers have been extracted and classified in accordance with their topics. The first step is classifying the signifiers in the areas of the following main topics: the demonstrations supporting and opposing Al-Assad and the government, the image of president Assad as it has been presented by Al-Jazeera, the image of the government security and military forces, the image of the armed opposition; the conflict outcomes, and the image of ethnics and sects that have been highlighted by media. Next, the main topics have been divided into sub-topics. For instance, all the signifiers which deal with the pro-Assad processions (as a main topic) have been extracted, then they were pigeonholed into sub-topics such as the purpose of demonstrating, the slogans, the numbers of demonstrators, the places, and the Interviews with the demonstrators, taking into consideration the significances of age, gender, clothes and other signs.

The classification can be also considered as one of the research results because each sub-heading in the semiotic analysis represents an outcome that contains signifiers which tackle one topic. The interrelation between the two levels of significance, the denotative and connotative, has been taken into consideration. First, the analysis depends on general description where the signifiers are put into their general contexts, then they are studied one by one. Each signifier requires independent explanation; therefore, I have not put them in tabulated groups. I have, rather, put them in a descriptive-analytical frame to facilitate explanation and understanding. The value of some signifiers is connected to the historical context which they evoke, others need analyzing the linguistic structure, while some others derive their value from their relation to religious or customary values predominant in the recipient's environment. I consider the contexts, in which some signs are put, signifiers in themselves. These contexts are essential to uncover the mechanisms of spreading propaganda and those of psychological war and manipulating the recipient. Therefore, it is necessary to study the contexts of mentioning the sources, those of sentimental enticements, those of historical recalls, those of employing the characteristics of Arabic language, those of adopting images, and those of spotlighting and obfuscating. The significances of contexts and meanings of signs help us recognize the identity of the targeted recipient of messages. Analyzing the significances of media personnel's voice tone is considered a part of the semiotic analysis of this study, too.



## How Did the Opponent Popular Movement Appear on Al-Jazeera?

### 1- Descriptions

Al-Jazeera introduced the popular movement in Syria as an uprising which is not different from what swept across other Arab countries such as Tunisia and Egypt, whether in mobility or in targets, which means that the movement aims at overthrowing the regime and that the movement is peaceful. Expressing that movement, the Channel employed a group of rhetorical terms:

"Protests spark"<sup>39</sup> A metonymy referring to the start of the uprising; the spark is the start of the fire outbreak. "Protests outbreak or demonstrations outbreak"<sup>40</sup> is a metaphor that the revolution is so hot and scorching that it will burn the regime. "The winds of change which are striking the region have blown"<sup>41</sup> is a sign that the revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt have affected the Syrian people leading them to uprising. The blowing of winds generally has a negative meaning. The wind destroys. The human heart receives it with a deep psychological tremble. It carries the devastation that terrifies the souls. "The wind of change has blown"<sup>42</sup>, that is the popular movement is going to uproot the regime as the wind uproots a tree. Al-Jazeera in these examples borrowed the destructive side from nature (fire, windstorm) to describe an event which it considers as revolutionary positive. The signifiers which represent destructive factors became positive ones as they were linked to a "positive topic".

"The popular rage"<sup>43</sup>, "The growth of the popular rage"<sup>44</sup> is a sign to the impatience of the people as a result of the regime's actions which has lasted for long years and has become more severe since the beginning of the events in 2011. "A popular revolution" (7 times), "Popular demonstrations" (4 times) denote that the overthrowing of the regime is the demand of all the Syrians. "The freedom revolution"<sup>45</sup> is a sign that the Syrians have been fed up with the chains imposed by the regime and that they yearn for liberation. The term "Freedom" is considered a glittering generality. "A new phase of struggle"<sup>46</sup> denotes that the popular movement is made up of a group of stages including demonstrating in the streets, picketing, strikes, and civil disobedience.

In order to describe the demonstrators, Al-Jazeera used a group of adjectives: "the revolutionaries" (8 times), "the outraged" (3 times), "the activists" (93 times), "the people yearning

39 25 March 2011, 27 May 2011. "شراة الاحتجاجات"

I cite in the footnotes the reports' dates only; more details about the reports are in the index that exists at the end of this chapter.

40 03 May 2011, 14 October 2011, 05 April 2013. "اندلاع الاحتجاجات أو اندلاع المظاهرات"

41 25 March 2011. "هبت رياح التغيير التي تعصف بالمنطقة"

42 23 March 2011, 29 March 2011. "عصفت رياح التغيير"

43 04 June 2011, 24 July 2011. "الغضب الشعبي"

44 24 July 2011. "تنامي الغضب الشعبي"

45 25 October 2011, 2 November 2011. "ثورة الحرية"

46 25 October 2011. "مرحلة نضالية جديدة"

for freedom"<sup>47</sup>, "the rebels" (41 times), "the revolutionary Syrian street"<sup>48</sup>, "the Syrian revolutionary youth"<sup>49</sup>. All these descriptions indirectly refer to the position of Al-Jazeera towards the opposition. The term "Revolutionary" or "Rebel", apart from its lexical indications, is a positive signifier in the Arab culture; "Revolutionary" is an Arab name because of its important meaning in the Arab history.

## 2- The Peacefulness of the Revolution

The popular movement appeared on Al-Jazeera Channel as a peaceful revolution. The protestors are seeking a democratic change without resorting to violence. Al-Jazeera's emphasis on this idea has a connotation that the regime is using the guns of its soldiers in the face of peaceful protestors who are not armed and who do not want to use arms. The rebels stick to the peacefulness of their revolution (20 times). The emphasis on this peacefulness encompasses propaganda to confront the regime's propaganda that shows the protestors as young people who are law-breakers, terrorists and criminals who carry arms to terrorize the security and the civilians simultaneously.

The revolutionaries appear during their demonstrations swearing to preserve the peacefulness of the revolution, which is a sign of the validity of the opponents. They swear by the Almighty God and those who swear have to be loyal to their commitment.

"A peaceful revolution whose stem and branches have become more massive and which refuses to shrink back."<sup>50</sup> The Channel assimilated the revolution to a tree whose branches were soft and thin, that is it could have been killed by the weather conditions, but now it is strong and can never be broken, can never be beaten. In this example, we notice that Al-Jazeera borrowed a "peaceful being" from nature (the tree) which is contrary to the previous examples (wind and fire). In this way, the channel gave two contrasting mental images to the same event. On the one hand the revolution seems as a devastative hurricane and a burning fire, on the other hand it looks as a peaceful tree and a symbol of blossoming.

## 3- The Popular Demands

During the beginning of the events, that is from the middle of March and during April 2011, Al-Jazeera concentrated on a group of popular demands which can be summarized in social and political reform and improving the living standards, eliminating the phenomenon of corruption, media and political freedom, and ending the emergency law, Al-Jazeera introduced these demands as accumulated for long years, denoting that the people are exhausted with the unwillingness of the regime to respond. The people were for long exhausted due to the corruption which Al-Jazeera assimilated to cancer that should be eradicated.

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<sup>47</sup> 04 October 2011. "الثائرون"، "الغاضبون"، "الناشطون"، "التواقون إلى الحرية".

<sup>48</sup> 12 September 2011. "الشارع السوري الثائر".

<sup>49</sup> 12 September 2011. "شباب سوريا الثائر".

<sup>50</sup> 14 October 2011. "ثورة سلمية أشد عودها و تأبى التراجع".

The repeal of Emergency Law was one of the demands. Al-Jazeera pointed out that many generations have been born and grown up under this law<sup>51</sup>. This is an implicit message that the Emergency Law in Syria was not an exceptional system which the government announces in order to face emergent and extraordinary situations in the country or in part of it. It is rather a permanent system or a continual situation that imposes chains on the freedom of individuals. It allows assaulting them to allegedly protect the internal security.

When the demands of the people had not yet suggested that the people wanted the fall of the regime, and when the government was sending delegations to listen to the demands of the people, Al-Jazeera undermined the reaction of the regime through which it was trying to show its positive response to the demands of the revolutionaries. Al-Jazeera rather concentrated its critical media discourse on the idea that the regime was too late to start the reformation indicating that the die was cast and that the regime could no more solve its problems in the way it did in Hama<sup>52</sup>, which was an implicit message that killing was the only way the regime resorted to solve its problems.

"Some people have gone so far in their ambition that they called for the disbandment of the current security apparatus and restructuring it."<sup>53</sup> This is a message through which the Channel wants to convey an idea that the Syrian people never dared to imagine to defy or face the Syrian Security, whereas now they are doing. The phrase "The current security apparatus" involves a sectarian sign that the majority of this Security is made up of the Alawite sect<sup>54</sup>. Therefore, the people want it to be restructured.

Little by little the nature of the wishes of the people changed to ask for the end of the besiege of Daraa<sup>55</sup> and denounce the violence of the security apparatus against the protesters. The crack between the people and the regime has begun to become mature in media. Late in April 2011, Al-Jazeera concentrated on the demand of overthrowing the regime (14 times). Assuring in its discourse that the people would only be satisfied by the "departure of the regime" (7 times), "the departure of Bashar Al-Assad" (7 times).

"Bringing glory back to Syria."<sup>56</sup> This is an implicit message which suggests that the ruling regime has brought destruction to Syria and put an end to its dignity and high profile among nations.

"Trying the president"<sup>57</sup>, "Executing the president" (4 times), two demands which Al-Jazeera mentioned in a way that suggested that the time of fear of Al-Assads had gone away in Syria. Before the popular movement, it was impossible to criticize the president or verbally degrade him.

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51 23 March 2011.

52 In 1982, the regime waged a military campaign against the Muslim Brothers in Hama and killed thousands of them. The regime opponents call this campaign as Hama Massacre.

53 30 March 2011. "ذهب البعض في طموحه إلى الدعوة لحل الجهاز الأمني الحالي و إعادة تشكيله".

54 A branch of Islam, Alawi Islam, who follow the Twelver school of Shia Islam. Assad belongs to this sect.

55 The beginning of the protesting movement was in Daraa Governorate and when these protests expanded in rang, the security forces cordoned it and besieged the city.

56 07 December 2011. "إعادة المجد إلى سوريا".

57 25 May 2012. "محاكمة الرئيس".

However, emphasizing these two demands in media is a signifier that the people want to avenge from the person who oppressively ruled them for long years. It is high time they had stood against injustice and taken revenge from him.

Al-Jazeera explicitly conveyed a message to the audience that the slogans demanding reformation entirely disappeared from the demonstrations and that they were replaced by the slogans that demanded not only the fall of the president but also his execution. This urges the demonstrators not to accept any negotiation or debate with the regime.

"Arming the Free Army"<sup>58</sup> Al-Jazeera did not take a direct attitude towards this demand. That is, it did not use utterances suggesting that it wished this demand to be realized, but the tone of the media people suggested that the Channel encouraged the idea of arming the armed opposition.

In 2013, the demonstrations disappeared from the screen of Al-Jazeera but the Channel assured that they were still occurring and that they were intermittent only due to the continual severe bombarding. The most prominent demands in 2013 were ending the besiege of some of the besieged cities by the regime's troops and allowing the humanitarian aids to enter these cities.

#### 4- The Demonstrators' Slogans

"The people want freedom only"<sup>59</sup> means that the freedom is the only demand of the people; any other solution is unacceptable. "We sacrifice our soul and blood for you, Daraa!"<sup>60</sup> that is the people are ready to sacrifice themselves for the safety of Daraa, the city which is suffering from the regime's military and security men's assault. This slogan bears a sign that suggests great rebel and defiance against the slogan the people voluntarily or forcibly reiterated for long years: "We sacrifice our soul and blood for you, Hafez!", then " We sacrifice our soul and blood for you, Bashar!" which meant that blood and souls are sacrificed for the sake of the leader and that death is nothing for the sake of the safety of the leader.

"Death rather than Humiliation" (6 times), which means that people prefer death to living in humiliation and insult. "The Syrian people can never be humiliated"<sup>61</sup>, that is Syrians do have dignity and pride and no force in the world can plunder their self-dignity.

"We aren't afraid; the army is with us."<sup>62</sup> The Channel raised this slogan to convey the message that the people are optimistic about the Syrian soldiers. These soldiers will by no means obey the orders of their commanders to shoot civilians. This slogan was highlighted when Al-Jazeera was propagandizing desertions from the Syrian army.

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58 25 May 2012. "تسليح الجيش الحر"

59 02 April 2011. Twice. "الشعب يريد حرية و بس"

60 02 April 2011, 03 May 2011. 3 times. "بالروح بالدم نفديك يا درعا"

61 27 November 2011. "الموت و لا المذلة". "الشعب السوري ما بينذل"

62 27 April 2011. "مو خايقين الجيش معنا"

"Ours is a revolution of the young, neither fundamentalist nor terrorist."<sup>63</sup> The Channel concentrated on this slogan as a defensive reaction on the regime's attack propagandizing the idea that there is no popular revolution. There is rather fundamentalist and terrorist movements seeking sabotage and disturbing the national security.

"The people want the fall of the regime"<sup>64</sup> (17times). This is a slogan which intends to state that the will of all the Syrians is destroying and knocking the ruling authority down. "This night won't last forever" a slogan which contains a message of hope. No matter how long and dark the night is, it will be followed by the new dawn. In other words, the injustice of the regime will come to an end, and the sun of justice, freedom and safety will rise again.

"No learning, no teaching, until the fall of the president."<sup>65</sup> That is, the protesters will stop all activities and stay in the squares of demonstration until the end of the rule of the president, a message on the insistence on the attitude.

"We aren't afraid; God is on our side"<sup>66</sup> is an indication of faith and confidence in God. This is a message that implicitly bears emotional and religious Inducements. It is emotional because it states that the regimes crackdown is very powerful and that there is no fear despite death being everywhere, and religious because it spreads confidence that God supports the vulnerable who have confidence in Him and, therefore, they will be victorious.

"Martyrs' blood can't be sold. Leave, Bashar, leave!"<sup>67</sup> means insisting on bringing an end to the rule of the president Bashar. Those who were killed by the security personnel's bullets are considered martyrs, that is martyrs who are immortal in God's paradise. So, their blood is not cheap, and its price cannot be negotiating the murderer and accepting any solution but the fall of the regime.

"You have Baathists, President! We have freedom, President! And you have Shabbiha."<sup>68</sup> This slogan has a sense of mockery. Oh President! You have a corrupt group of supporters who abuse the homeland. Whereas we have good free people who are able to build the country. The opposition wants to state that the Baath Party<sup>69</sup> activists are only a handful of supporters who sabotage the country through their corruption and that the President is using non-government illegal armed groups (Shabbiha) in order to control the homeland under his fist.

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<sup>63</sup> 28 April 2011. "ثورتنا ثورة شباب لا سلفية ولا إرهاب".

<sup>64</sup> "الشعب يريد إسقاط النظام".

<sup>65</sup> 04 June 2011. "لا دراسة ولا تدريس حتى يسقط الرئيس".

<sup>66</sup> 20 June 2011. "مو خايفين الله معنا".

<sup>67</sup> 07 July 2011. "دم الشهداء ما بينباع ، يا بشار اطلع اطلع".

<sup>68</sup> 24 July 2011. "عندك بعثة يارئيس ، عا الحرية يارئيس و عندك شبيحة".

<sup>69</sup> The ruling party in Syria during the periods of Hafez Al-Assad and his son Bashar. It is the leading party of the state and the society.

"Syria wants freedom."<sup>70</sup> Here the word 'Syria' refers, on one hand, to comprehensiveness, that is, all the Syrian people want to emancipate from the cuffs of the regime. On the other hand, Syria<sup>71</sup> appears as a chained imprisoned girl who longs for emancipation from the oppression of her jailer.

"And we want rid of you, Bashar!"<sup>72</sup>, "Come on, leave, Bashar!"<sup>73</sup>, "Listen to the words of the revolutionaries and leave, Bashar!"<sup>74</sup> are slogans of direct defiance through which they emphasize that they intend to overthrow the president, that he has to listen to their demand and leave at once. This is a big verbal defiance which was impossible to take place before the start of the popular movement. Publicizing these slogans by the media suggests that the whole world should see the collapse of the mental image of the powerful tyrant ruler.

"Victory, victory, nothing but victory."<sup>75</sup> This is an indication of the inevitability of the victory of the opposition and the defeat of the regime. Victory is the aim and the end. The revolutionaries will not accept defeat. They will not accept any solution with the regime.

## 5- The Islamization of the Revolution

Since March 2011, the beginning of the revolutionary events in Syria, the Channel, on purpose or not, has given the revolution an Islamic character. Since the start, Al- Jazeera's implicit messages have suggested that the fight of the regime with the people has been a sectarian one.

"The scream has risen around Al-Omari Mosque."<sup>76</sup> What is meant by the scream is the voice of the frightened terrified people by the shooting of the security personnel. The mosque has been mentioned as a place around which the events take place. This is an implicit message that these oppressed people belong to the Sunni sect. "The mosque which has become the fort of the protesters."<sup>77</sup> This means that the mosque is the only shelter and citadel that protects the demonstrators. Al-Jazeera highlighted that crowds of worshipers organize or hold pickets in the mosques. This means that these religious centers have turned into points for organizing and managing the popular movement. It also showed thousands of people demonstrating in the streets after Friday or Al-Taraweeh<sup>78</sup> prayers. "From Al-Rifa'ee Mosque, the worshipers came out after performing Friday's prayer."<sup>79</sup>. This statement contains a connection between performing the religious duty which is the prayer and coming out for the revolution against the oppressing ruler. It also contains another implicit message stating that the rebels are pious people who continually

70 04 October 2011. Twice. "سوريا بدها حرية"

71 The word 'Syria' is feminine in Arabic Language.

72 04 October 2011. "و بدنا نشيلك يا بشار"

73 04 July 2011, 07 July 2011, 14 October 2011. "يا الله ارحل يا بشار"

74 07 November 2011. "اسمع كلام الثوار و ارحل يا بشار"

75 03 April 2012. "النصر النصر لا شيء غير النصر"

76 23 March 2011. "تعالى الصرخة في محيط المسجد العمري"

77 23 March 2011. "الجامع الذي بات معقل المحتجين"

78 A prayer performed every night during the month of Ramadan. It continues nearly until Al-Fajr prayer at dawn.

79 02 April 2011. "من مسجد الرفاعي خرج المصلون بعد أدائهم صلاة الجمعة"

perform their religious rites. This gives the revolution more credibility and ability of affecting the Syrian society and helps to polarize it to participate.

(1)



Demonstrations against Assad inside a mosque.<sup>80</sup>

The Channel showed the rebels as pious people who were confident in God through scenes in which the protestors read holy verses from the holy Quran or performed prayers asking for help from God. It also portrayed that their only weapons were worship and prayers. This is, on the one hand, an indication that their only power is the help from God. On the other hand, they are not armed law-breakers as the Syrian government claims. One of the protestors' prayers was: "Oh Allah! you destroy and are not destroyed, and those whom you support will never be humiliated"<sup>81</sup>, a sign of their confidence in God. Nobody can humiliate them as their loyalty to God protects them from all evils. Moreover, Bashar Al-Assad can by no means conquer God as He destroys and cannot be destroyed. Al-Jazeera pointed out that reading verses from the Quran on the spirits of the martyrs murdered by the regime's forces makes the people feel tranquil and satisfied with God's predestination.

The Channel drew the audience's attention to the verse raised by the protesters: "If you support Allah, He will support you."<sup>82</sup> This is a message from Al-Jazeera which emphasizes that the revolution is an aid to God and that those who aid God and the religion of God will be victorious by the help of God. This means that the revolution will certainly be victorious.

The Channel pointed out that the celebrations of the Eid were postponed till another notice. Now the ritual of their daily life was assembling in the streets to reiterate the slogans of freedom and change. What is meant by the word Eid are Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha<sup>83</sup>. This is a sign of stopping the feelings of joy and stopping this ritual (the Eid), which is closely connected to Islamic belief, until they have realized their aims of demonstrating. Assembling in the streets and

<sup>80</sup> 29 March 2011

<sup>81</sup> 05 August 2011. "يا الله، إنك تقضي ولا يقضى عليك، إنه لا يذل من واليت".

<sup>82</sup> This statement is a Quran verse, Chapter of Muhammad, verse No. 7. "إن تتصروا الله ينصركم".

<sup>83</sup> Eid Al-Fitr is the first celebration day for Muslims on the first day of the month of Shawal. It occurs after the fasting month of Ramadan. Eid Al-Adha is the second celebration day for Muslims. It takes place on the tenth day of Zul-Hijjah. This Eid is considered an anniversary of the story of the Prophet Ibrahim, who wanted to sacrifice his son Ismail to obey the orders of God.

reiterating the slogans of freedom has become a holy ritual that substitutes the religious ones. "The revolutionaries know that the street will remain their Kiblah until the day of changing the regime comes."<sup>84</sup> Al-Jazeera has likened the street to Kiblah<sup>85</sup>. Coming out to the street to demonstrate is a religious duty like Haj and like facing the Kiblah to pray.

Al-Jazeera pointed out statements which the demonstrators iterated in some of their demonstrations. "When comes the Victory of Allah, and Conquest"<sup>86</sup>, that is to say that the fall of the regime and the victory of the opposition are a victory to God and His religion. Conquest has political, economic and psychological signs. The political ones are represented in the Muslim army controlling non-Islamic (disbelieving) nations and countries in order to spread Islam which is the pretext why occupation is called conquest. The economic signs are centered around the conqueror getting the spoils and Al-Jizya money<sup>87</sup> from the peoples of the countries which have been subjugated to Islam. As for the psychological signs, Muslims believe that the Earth shall be inherited by the good servants of Allah. Mentioning this verse by the demonstrators indicates that they feel that Syria is a non-Islamic country– as its leader belongs to the Alawite sect who are considered disbelievers by the opposition. Moreover, this verse indicates their wish to have Syria subjected to the Islamic rule and to enforce Al-Jizya system on the minorities who refuse to become Muslims.

Al-Jazeera repeatedly showed the people shouting out: "God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest" in their demonstrations or saying: "O my Lord, Here I am at Your service." That is, the revolution is a holy movement intending to meet the call of God and to obey his orders<sup>88</sup>.

"Our master Muhammad is our leader forever."<sup>89</sup> This statement is one of the opposition's slogans which Al-Jazeera pointed out in reply to president Bashar who mocked the popular movement and underestimated it when he said that the revolution lacks thinkers and wondered where the thinker was and who knows a thinker for this revolution. He assured that revolutions need leaders, and wondered if anybody knew who the leader of this revolution was. The Channel pointed out that the leader of the revolutionaries was the Prophet Muhammad, that is, the Islamic message and that he would remain their leader forever. This is an alteration in the slogan which the Syrian people had reiterated for long years: "Forever, forever, Oh Hafez Al-Assad."<sup>90</sup>

84 07 November 2011. "أما التآثرون فيعرفون أن الشارع سيظل قبلتهم إلى أن يأتي يوم تغيير نظام الحكم"

85 Al-Kaabah in Mecca is considered the Muslims Kiblah. They direct their faces towards it during their prayers. They circumambulate it during the Hajj. Muslims consider it the holiest place on Earth.

86 Verse No.1 in the Alnasr (Victory) Chapter in the Quran. "إذا جاء نصر الله و الفتح"

87 Al-Jizya or the tribute is an amount of money imposed on sects which cannot be plundered like Christians and Jews and all those who are followers of a religion other than Islam.

88 Linguistically, (to meet) means to respond to or answer the call or orders. "O my Lord, Here I am at your service" is a statement that the performers of Hajj reiterate. It means obedience, worship and following the orders of God.

89 25 January 2013. "قاتلنا للأبد سيدنا محمد"

90 The Syrian people used to reiterate this slogan during all the activities of the party, the students and the popular processions. "إلى الأبد إلى الأبد يا حافظ الأسد"



"We aren't frightened of death; we are the grandchildren of Ibn Al-Waleed."<sup>91</sup>. The demonstrators appeared on the screen of Al-Jazeera reiterating this statement. It is an implicit message that they are fighting the enemy of God. They are the grandchildren of The Drawn Sword of God<sup>92</sup>. In other words, their revolution is one whose aim is to bring victory to the religion of God. Therefore, they are not afraid of death.

"There is no god but God, and the martyr is God's beloved."<sup>93</sup>, "There is no god but God and Assad is the enemy of God"<sup>94</sup>. The demonstrators have chosen the Islamic Shahada<sup>95</sup> : There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God; kept the first part, and changed the words of the second part to make the martyr, that is the person killed by regime, God's beloved, and to make Al-Assad the enemy of God. This is an indication which assures the legitimacy of fighting against the president as he is the enemy of God and as those who resist this regime will by no means lose because even if they are killed, their destination is paradise and the approval of God as they are martyrs.

During its first months, the popular movement was linked on Al-Jazeera screen to Fridays<sup>96</sup> and Friday is a sacred day for Muslims. Demonstrations were on Fridays. This is an implicit message that Sunnis were the nerve of this revolution. "The raging people wait for Friday after the other"<sup>97</sup> that is, demonstrations start every Friday after offering the prayers.

"The same scene is repeated" (3 times), that is, the way demonstrators come out of the mosques, their picketing inside the mosques, and their cheers are repeated in more than one town on the Syrian land. This is an indication of the unity of the Syrian revolutionary scene.

## 6- Continuation of Demonstrations

Al-Jazeera showed the demonstrations as a wave of movement that never stops day and night. "Protests that have never stopped since Friday."<sup>98</sup>, "two weeks have elapsed while the raging protesters have been trying to come out in groups to the streets, the mosques and the public squares.", "The Syrian street is continuing the movement until the demands have been realized."<sup>99</sup> This continuity is an indication of steadfastness and defiance, "The protesting movement tirelessly

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91 18 November 2011. "ما منهاب الموت، أخفاد ابن الوليد"

92 Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, a companion of the prophet Muhammad. He was a military Leader and the Prophet called him The Drawn Sword of Allah. He fought numerous battles for Islamic purposes.

93 18 November 2011. "لا إله إلا الله و الشهيد حبيب الله"

94 06 January 2012. "لا إله إلا الله والأسد عدو الله"

95 The Islamic Shahada: 'There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God' is considered the first pillar of Islam. The one who does not recite it is not considered a Muslim. Muslims believe that one cannot become Muslim until the recitation of the Shahada. Through the recitation of the Shahada, one admits and testifies that there is no god but the one God and that the prophet Muhammad is a messenger sent by God to guide humanity.

96 Friday – Al-Jumaa- is a day of great importance for Muslims. It has a special prayer. one of the Surahs of the Quran is named after it. According to the prophet's Sunna it is considered the master of all days. On it, Adam was created and was entered into Paradise and sent out of it. Moreover, Judgment Day will take place only on Friday.

97 24 July 2011. "الغاضبون ينتظرون الجمعة تلو الأخرى"

98 23 March 2011. "احتجاجات لا تتوقف منذ يوم الجمعة"

99 02 April 2011. "الشارع السوري مستمر بالحراك حتى تحقيق المطالب"

continues"<sup>100</sup>, that is, the regime's unresponsiveness to the demands has not lessen the vitality of the revolution. "The momentum of the demonstrations is spreading to link day with night over the whole week."<sup>101</sup> As if the street became the house of the Syrians and all their lives became demonstrations.

"The popular rage in Syria knows no regression"<sup>102</sup>, "Demonstrations continue"<sup>103</sup>, "The throats never stop"<sup>104</sup>, these are signs that Syria is echoing the shouts of the revolutionaries day and night with throats that never get tired or bored. "Protesting is still the language of the street."<sup>105</sup> Al-Jazeera has likened the street to a human being who speaks a language, which is an indication that all the people have become one body and one spirit that speak the same language which is the language of the revolution against the ruling regime.

## 7- The Geographic Comprehensiveness

Al-Jazeera assured that the popular movement included all the Syrian cities, governorates, and even the narrow lanes in the streets. "The wind of change has shaken cities in the south, middle and even coast of the country."<sup>106</sup>, "the fast tempo of the protests has vertically continued marching ahead towards the middle of the country and has reached Homs."<sup>107</sup> The Channel portrayed the demonstrations like a flood flowing everywhere. It mentioned numerous names of districts, governorates, small towns, small villages and even such tiny countryside areas that the Syrian citizen might have never heard of before. It might sometimes mention 15 names of cities and villages non-stop. This fast and condensed account of the names of areas by Al-Jazeera's media personnel suggested that Syria was burning with demonstrations in every neighborhood and every hand span of the Syrian land. "Their shout is one and it echoed across many Syrian cities and villages."<sup>108</sup> Thus, the Syria governorates and cities are portrayed like one body, one throat, and one shout.

100 03 May 2011. "دون كلل تتواصل الحركة الاحتجاجية"

101 03 May 2011. "يمتد زخم المظاهرات ليصل النهار بالليل و على مدار الأسبوع"

102 04 June 2011. "لا يعرف الغضب الشعبي في سوريا انكفاء"

103 04 October 2011. "تواصل التظاهر"

104 04 October 2011. "لا تتوقف الحناجر"

105 25 October 2011. "لا يزال الاحتجاج لغة الشارع"

106 25 March 2011. "رياح التغيير هزت مدن في جنوب البلاد و وسطها و حتى ساحلها"

107 25 March 2011. "واصل زخم الاحتجاجات تقدمه عموديا باتجاه وسط البلاد و وصل إلى حمص"

108 02 April 2011. "صرختهم واحدة و صداها تردد في العديد من المدن و القرى السورية"

(2-3)



Demonstrations which are presented as crowded.<sup>109</sup>



## 8- Sectarian Comprehensiveness

Al-Jazeera reassured that those who came out into the streets represented different political, religious, sectarian and social spectrums. This was a reply to the regime's propaganda which popularized the fear of a sectarian and doctrinal separation in the country and accused the extremists of standing behind the events in Syria. The discourse of the Channel assured the unity of the Syrian people. It also assured that the revolutionaries refused any mentioning of a doctrinal struggle because the problem was between the people and the regime not among the different slices of the people. In the eyes of the revolutionaries, the regime would not hesitate to resort to all method through which it may drag the revolution into difficult access ways which end in sectarian fighting where the regime itself would take the role of the judge and the savior. The Channel highlighted that the revolutionaries were aware of the plans of the regime and that the revolution was going ahead towards the dawn of its spring even if all Arabs and West failed it<sup>110</sup>.

"Freedom, freedom. Muslims, Christians, Druze and Alawites."<sup>111</sup> In this slogan, freedom appears as a demand of not only the Sunni sect, but also of all the sects of the people. However, if we analyze the religious sects mentioned in the slogan, we find that the demonstrators have considered the Druze and Alawites<sup>112</sup> as non-Muslim sects which are independent from Islam. This reflects the fact of the way many Sunnis view the other Islamic minorities.

<sup>109</sup> 29 March 2011.

<sup>110</sup> 27 September 2011.

<sup>111</sup> 07 July 2011. "حرية حرية، إسلام و مسيحية و دروز و علوية".

<sup>112</sup> The Alawites are part of the Twelver school of Shia Islam. The Druze are a sect that developed out of Islamic Ismaili sect.

## 9 - Revolutionary Solidarity

Al-Jazeera presented the Syrian people as sentimental loyal people. "Citizens who came out in a solidarity procession supporting the bereaved city of Daraa"<sup>113</sup>, that is, the people of the other governorates sympathize with the pains of the people of Daraa. The Channel has assimilated this governorate to a mother crying and mourning her children who were killed. "They come out in solidarity with the stricken cities"<sup>114</sup>. "The protests have unified the different slices of the Syrian society."<sup>115</sup> That is, the revolution's aim is one and the means of expressing it are one.

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Demonstrators stand shoulder-to-shoulder during demonstrating signifying their revolutionary collaboration.<sup>116</sup>

The Channel also portrayed that the demonstrators were carrying the wounded and go on demonstrating as an indication that they were loyal to each other and that they were determined to face the regime's forces.

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Demonstrators carry the wounded to save them.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>113</sup> 25 March 2011. "مواطنون خرجوا في مسيرة تضامنية مع مدينة درعا التلكي".

<sup>114</sup> 25 January 2013. "يخرجون للتضامن مع المدن المنكوبة".

<sup>115</sup> 25 March 2011. "الإحتجاجات وخذت مختلف شرائح المجتمع السوري".

<sup>116</sup> 14 October 2011.

<sup>117</sup> 25 March 2011.

## 10 – Steadfastness and Defiance

Al-Jazeera densely highlighted the popular defiance to the regime's suppression. "The massive deployment of the army forces could not be a protective shield that prevented the infection of demonstrations from spreading to some other cities."<sup>118</sup> This is an indication that the security policy which the regime practiced to terrify the people could not realize its aims. The Channel used the word 'infection' which generally refers to the spread of diseases. However, applying it to the demonstrations rendered another meaning to it: the popular movement became like a plague that would fall onto the head of the regime and destroy it. "The wall of fear has fallen forever"<sup>119</sup>, "The Kingdom of Fear has fallen apart."<sup>120</sup> This is an indication to the inability of security personnel to terrify the people again. In these two examples, we see that Al-Jazeera did not talk about dictatorship but about its result (fear). In order to overemphasize dictatorship, Al-Jazeera magnified the image of fear resulting from it by describing this fear as the kingdom.

According to Al-Jazeera, the struggle of wills has turned into a battle of bone-breaking the field of which is the whole homeland. That is, the regime is standing on the lookout against the wishes of its people and changing Syria into a violence theater. Nevertheless, the protesters are facing the military operations with continual demonstrations. They are also ready to sacrifice for the sake of freedom.

"In spite of the suffocating security grip"<sup>121</sup>, "In spite of the Security campaign"<sup>122</sup>, "Despite heavy gunfire"<sup>123</sup>, "Careless of the severe suppression, the protesting crowding which have become a daily routine continues"<sup>124</sup>, "Death could not deter them"<sup>125</sup>, "Demonstrations which are still insuppressible."<sup>126</sup> "If killing the revolutionaries and torturing them had terrified a popular revolution, it would have been the Syrian revolution. But this didn't happen. When they saw that their silence was death, they shouted out: yes to death, no to humiliation. When they saw that their silence was slavery, they demanded the change of the regime"<sup>127</sup>, "Demonstrations increase in spite of the siege by the regime's Shabbiha"<sup>128</sup>, "Demonstrations continue despite the security repression"<sup>129</sup>, "careless of death, The protests carry on despite the security repression"<sup>130</sup>, "Bullets

<sup>118</sup> 23 March 2011. "الانتشار المكثف لقوات الجيش لم يكن درعا واقيا لانتقال عدوى المظاهرات إلى بعض المدن الأخرى"

<sup>119</sup> 02 April 2011. "جدار الخوف قد سقط إلى غير رجعة"

<sup>120</sup> 20 June 2011. "تصدعت مملكة الخوف"

<sup>121</sup> 10 August 2011. "رغم القبضة الأمنية الخائفة"

<sup>122</sup> 10 August 2011. "رغم الحملة الأمنية"

<sup>123</sup> 10 August 2011. "رغم إطلاق النار الكثيف"

<sup>124</sup> 14 August 2011. "غير أبهة بشدة القمع تستمر التجمعات الاحتجاجية التي باتت عادة يومية"

<sup>125</sup> 10 April 2011. "لم يثبهم الموت"

<sup>126</sup> 18 November 2011. "تظاهرات لا تزال عصية على الكبح"

<sup>127</sup> 27 September 2011. "لو أن ثورة شعبية أخافها قتل الثائرين و تعذيبهم لكانت الثورة السورية، لكن ذلك لم يحدث. رأوا صمتهم موتا فقالوا الموت و لا المذلة و رأوا الصمت عبودية فطالبوا بتغيير النظام"

<sup>128</sup> 25 May 2012. "تزايد المظاهرات رغم حصار شبيحة النظام"

<sup>129</sup> 25 May 2012. "استمرار المظاهرات رغم القمع الأمني"

<sup>130</sup> 31 December 2011. "تستمر الاحتجاجات رغم القمع الأمني غير مكترئين بالموت"

could not penetrate the chest of the cohesive revolution unsupported by brothers nor by strangers"<sup>131</sup>. These are signifiers of the strength of the defiance.

Al-Jazeera promoted that the revolution is to bear fruit sooner or later and that the demonstrators are getting more optimistic each time a martyr falls. They are armed by a revolutionary will which has not been broken by the regime's war machine to the moment. Moreover, they are determined to raise the freedom slogan even after its heavy bloody cost has been so clear. "A revolution which survives despite the attempts to bury it alive."<sup>132</sup> The Channel assimilated the regime's operations to 'Wa'd <sup>133</sup>. In other words, it likened the revolution to a newborn girl who the regime is trying to bury alive. This is an implicit message suggesting the brutality and savageness which the regime's armed forces are practicing against the demonstrators.

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Demonstrators challenge the tank of the Syrian army.<sup>134</sup>

## 11 - Human Icons

In the studied sample, Al-Jazeera did not cover activities of opposition figures living in Syria and having a representative status. The revolution rather appeared as if it were a movement of young people coming out to the streets and cheering. the Channel did not highlight opposition thinkers or leaders organizing the movement inside.

Hamza Al-Khateeb<sup>135</sup>, "That's how the boy looked like"<sup>136</sup> an indication of how he looked like before murdering him. His photo is presented in a healthy state. "That's how the boy looks like now." His photo is represented showing him murdered, a corpse full of the effects of torture. "How

<sup>131</sup> 04 October 2011. "الرصاص لم يخترق صدر الثورة المتماسكة بدون دعم من الشقيق و الغريب"

<sup>132</sup> 04 October 2011. "ثورة تحيا رغم محاولات وندها"

<sup>133</sup> Female infanticide 'Wa'd in Arabic' is burying the newborn girl alive. Arabs in Al-Jahili era before Islam used to practice it because they preferred boys and because they believed that girls would bring them shame and poverty.

<sup>134</sup> 17 May 2011.

<sup>135</sup> A 13-year-old boy from the Governorate of Daraa. The opposition accused the security personnel of torturing and killing him because he demonstrated with a group of young people. The regime and its supporters refused the charge.

<sup>136</sup> 27 May 2011. "هكذا كان الولد، هكذا صار الولد، كيف تتحول أجساد الأطفال الغضة في لحظات إلى جثث مشوهة؟"

can the soft bodies of kids be turned in moments into deformed corpses?". Here is a message aiming at stirring up the feelings in favor of the rebels and showing the regime as a beast assaulting the softness of kids and throwing their rotten corpses away. "The murderers did not devour the kid's liver, but they cut his genital organ out"<sup>137</sup>. These sentences call historical events back<sup>138</sup>. The Channel has indirectly likened Hamza, the kid, to Hamza, the prophet Muhammad's uncle, and assimilated the regime to Hind, the liver-eater. This is an implicit message which makes the demonstrators righteous people and the regime evil people. "He was detained alive and killed because he was cheering for freedom." A message criticizing the security personnel who murdered a kid only because he was cheering for freedom.

Hussein Al-Zubi<sup>139</sup>, a detainee who was murdered under torture. Nawaf Al-Basheer<sup>140, 141</sup> the Sheikh of Al-Baggara tribe has been detained by the security forces. The legal activist, Dana Jawabrah<sup>142</sup>, has been detained by the security forces.

Ibrahim Qashoush<sup>143</sup>, who was called the nightingale of the revolution, was murdered by stabbing him with a knife, eradicating his throat and throwing his body away into the Orontes River. "The nightingale of the revolution was killed only because he sang."<sup>144</sup> This is a message denoting the hatred of the regime of its opponents. The eradication of the throat indicates how furious the security forces were with the effects of this young man's voice and how effective his slogans on the revolutionary movement were: "Come on, Bashar! Leave!" This was one of Qashoush's slogans where he directly defies the personality of the president.

Mamoun Al-Homsi<sup>145</sup> was previously imprisoned for five years because he demanded political reforms. Al-Jazeera only presented some of his opinions about the incredibility of the regime concerning the reforms<sup>146</sup>.

Muntaha Al-Atrash<sup>147</sup>, the daughter of the leader Sultan Basha Al-Atrash<sup>148</sup>, was presented by Al-Jazeera as the most prominent opponent of the current regime. Her opinion of the current situation in Syria was: "In Syria, there are no infiltrators, no conspirators nor armed criminal gangs.

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137 27 May 2011. "لم يأكل أيًا من القطة كبد الولد، لكنهم قطعوا عضوه التناسلي."

138 Hind Bint Ataba was an extreme anti-Islam woman. She killed Hamza Ibn Abdul-Muttaleb, Prophet Muhammad's uncle, and ate his liver. She became a Muslim after the Muslims conquered and controlled Mecca.

139 27 May 2011.

140 The head Sheikh of Al-Baggara tribe, which is a widely spread Arab tribe stretching among Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Turkey. It is considered the largest Syrian tribe. This Sheikh was detained by the Syrian security forces.

141 05 August 2011, 25 September 2011.

142 03 May 2011.

143 07 July 2011.

144 07 July 2011. "قُتِلَ بلبل الثورة لأنه غنى"

145 A member of the Syrian People's Council (Parliament). As an opponent of the Syrian regime, he was detained by the security forces.

146 29 March 2011.

147 04 July 2011.

148 The general leader of the Great Syria Revolution against the French mandate in 1925. Muntaha Al-Atrash, the daughter of this leader, is a journalist and a spokeswoman of the Syrian Human Rights Organization.

The criminals and infiltrators are only the Assads."<sup>149</sup> The discrediting of Muntaha Al-Atrash of the regime's propaganda has a great effect. On the one hand, its importance emerges from her being the daughter of the leader Sultan Basha Al-Atrash. On the other hand, she represents the Druze sect. This is an implicit message which suggests that the Druze, one of the minorities, are against the policies of the ruling regime.

Ali Farzat<sup>150</sup> is a caricaturist and a critic. According to Al-Jazeera, the Syrian state's security broke his fingers. This is an indication that the regime was disappointed with his hands with which he drew the regime and criticized it.

Abu Al-Alaa Al-Mi'arri<sup>151</sup>, was one of the historical human icons which Al-Jazeera called back. His name was linked to the events taking place in Mi'aratul-Nu'man<sup>152</sup>. He was a Syrian poet and philosopher who died in 1057 AD. Al-Jazeera mentioned this historical icon in the context of its account of the opposing popular movement in Mi'aratul-Nu'man. Those who are in this movement are the grandchildren of this philosopher and poet. They are the people of his area. Furthermore, it mentioned this icon in the context of the news stories of the bombarding by the regime's forces and of their exaggeration in practicing violence and destruction. This association is a signifier that the regime is an enemy of thought, literature and civilization. Al-Jazeera was, simultaneously, trying to pushing the people of this area to continue demonstrating through their glory and the glorification of their history. Most of the Syrians are affected by praise and glorification. They feel they are heroes with a great history<sup>153</sup>. This style is important in the psychological war and the channel which knows the strengths and weaknesses of peoples, their psychological characteristics and conditions is able to mobilize these peoples and manipulate them in a way that suits the agendas of the policies which guide its editorial policy.

## 12 - Regional Icons

Daraa, "the cradle of the revolution"<sup>154</sup>, is an indication of the birth of the popular movement in Daraa. This is considered a Medal of Honor for this city which, in accordance to Al-Jazeera, unified the slices of the Syrian society and motivated them to follow the example of its residents in coming out to support it.

As for Damascus, the Channel concentrated on many parts of the city like Al-Marja, Kafr Sousa and Al-Meedan, that is, the center of the capital, Damascus. This gives an impression that the fall of the regime is close. The same applies to the suburbs of the capital. Al-Jazeera tried to drum into

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<sup>149</sup> 04 July 2011. "لا متأمرين ولا عصايات إجرامية مسلحة في سورية، إنما المجرمون والمتنسجون هم آل الأسد."

<sup>150</sup> 04 October 2011.

<sup>151</sup> 04 July 2011.

<sup>152</sup> It is located south of Idlib; a Governorate in the north of Syria.

<sup>153</sup> This description emerges from the observations of the researcher and her communication with the slices of the Syrian people for long years.

<sup>154</sup> 03 April 2013. "درعا مهد الثورة"



the audience the idea that the demonstrators are densely creeping from Damascus suburbs into the capital. This is a mental image that makes the receiver feel that the regime is besieged and that it is about to fall. "in the capital's suburbs, the voice of defiance is rising up."<sup>155</sup>

Homs is the capital of the revolution<sup>156</sup>. This is an indication of the importance of the revolutionary movement in this city and of its effect on the rest of the Syrian regions. As for Aleppo, Al-Jazeera clarified how important it would be for the demonstrations to reach this governorate as it is the second most important governorate in Syria after Damascus. According to Al-Jazeera, the alignment of Aleppo with the revolutionary activity is crucial to deciding the fate of the Syrian regime.

"Hama is in the heart."<sup>157</sup>, "The name of Hama has been linked in the Syrian conscience to what is described as the Massacre of the Century."<sup>158</sup>, "Hama has become a historic symbol."<sup>159</sup> Al-Jazeera linked the revolution of Hama in 2011 to the events of Hama in 1982. It depended upon sentimental appeals pointing out that the regime had previously destroyed this city and now it was committing group massacres in it. The Channel did not mention any details about the 1982 massacre. It only hinted to it. Hinting can have many significances some of which are: 1- the Syrian people are the targeted audience; the channel supposes that the Syrians certainly know the story of the massacre. 2- the channel considers that this given piece of information is already well-known by all the Arab audience. 3- enticing the curiosity and intelligence of the targeted audience and motivating them to search. 4- the ambiguity of the information is a means of agitation propaganda. If the recipients were lazy to search and check and if their relationship with the channel which they follow were strong, they would become rapidly and unconsciously affected by the message. In the above-mentioned example, the recipient will understand that the regime committed massacres without knowing where and when.

Baba Amr, Bab As Sbaa, and many other parts and neighborhoods of the cities in addition to many towns and cities of Syria have become icons indicating the revolution comprehensiveness of all the cities, towns and villages of Syria. Most of the regions studied in the sample are inhabited by the Sunni Muslims. This dyes the popular movement with a sectarian color.

155 03 May 2011. "في ضواحي العاصمة يخرج صوت التحدي"

156 11 December 2011, 12 June 2012. Synonymous phrases have been repeated 4 times. "حمص عاصمة الثورة"

157 05 August 2011. "حماء في القلب"

158 "إسم حماه قد ارتبط في الوجدان السوري بما يوصف بمجزرة القرن"

Al-Jazeera has many times reminded the audience of the military campaign which the regime assaulted on the Muslim Brothers in 1982 when it killed many of them.

159 07 July 2011. "حماء تحولت إلى رمز تاريخي"

### 13 – The Names of Jumaas (Fridays) and Their Signs

The demonstrators called Fridays with different special eponyms<sup>160</sup>. Al-Jazeera highlighted these eponyms and densely promoted them. When the opposition were getting ready for the coming Friday through activities on the social networking sites, Al-Jazeera used to cover and popularize these activities. That is, Al-Jazeera was an important means of the opposition's for calling for the demonstrations and preparing for them.

"Home Guards Friday"<sup>161</sup>, Al-Jazeera indicated that this eponym is an indication through which the demonstrators remind the army of their country, while besieging cities and assaulting others, that it has another different role from the one it is doing. The most prominent target of the message are the soldiers of the Syrian army in order to rebel and not to obey the orders of their military leaders who support the violence of the regime.

"Freedom Children's Friday"<sup>162</sup> calls for solidarity with the children who were arrested and tortured and some of whom were killed. It is a reminder that the regime is a children murderer. "Yes to death, no to humiliation Friday"<sup>163</sup> is a reminder that the people prefer death to living under the mercy of a regime which humiliates and degrades them and which would not grant them an honorable life. "The free people of the army Friday"<sup>164</sup> is a message of respect to the defectors soldiers and officers who refused to shoot the citizens.

"Sheikh Saleh Al-Ali's Friday"<sup>165</sup> is a message of sectarian indication which the opposition of the Sunni majority directs to the Alawite youth in an attempt to polarize them to the revolution. This is to remind the Alawites that a leader who belongs to them fought against the French oppression. He fought and strived for the sake of freedom. That is, the policy of Al-Assad, who is an Alawite, is entirely contrary to the policy of Sheikh Saleh Al-Ali. This is also to state the following message: 'Look! We are not sectarian. We rather respect the Alawite Sect and specify a whole day named after an Alawite leader.

"High time to advance into Damascus Friday"<sup>166</sup> denotes that the regime is going to fall this Friday because the revolutionaries are to control Damascus, the capital of Syria and the regime's security capital as well. "Damascus! Our rendezvous is close Friday"<sup>167</sup> This eponym appeared when the opposition was not able to overthrow the regime in Al-Sham. Damascus in Arabic is a feminine name. In this eponym- "Damascus! Our rendezvous is close."- Damascus appears as a

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160 Friday – Al-Jumaa- is a day of great importance for Muslims. It has a special prayer. one of the Surahs of the Quran is named after it. According to the prophet's Sunna it is considered the master of all days. On it, Adam was created and was entered into Paradise and sent out of it. Moreover, Judgment Day will take place only on Friday.

161 27 May 2011. "جمعة حماة الديار"

162 04 June 2011. "جمعة أطفال الحرية"

163 02 September 2011. "جمعة الموت و لا المذلة"

164 14 October 2011. "جمعة أحرار الجيش"

165 18 June 2011. Saleh Al-Ali, a Sheikh from the Alawite sect. He led the revolution against the French, 1918.

166 09 November 2012. "جمعة أوان الزحف إلى دمشق"

167 25 May 2012. "جمعة دمشق موعدنا قريب"

female whom the revolutionaries are trying to appease her, reassuring her that they were coming to save her and their dating time is not far. Soon they will be victorious and set her free from the grip of tyranny.

"Confident of Allah's victory Friday"<sup>168</sup> is a message of spreading hope into the opponents' hearts. God is certainly to support them. It's a must. "The No-Fly Zone Friday."<sup>169</sup> This eponym has an invitation to all Arab and international authorities and institutions to prevent the regime from bombardment.

"Free women Friday"<sup>170</sup> is a signifier of the Syrian women, the revolution activist women, the mothers of martyrs and opinion prisoners. This is an indication of the appreciation of the Syrian street to the suffering of women because of the regime's policy. "The clarion call Friday."<sup>171</sup> Denotes mobilizing all the human and material forces of the opposition in order to face the regime. "Immediate armament Friday"<sup>172</sup> is a message through which the opposition asks the Arab and international countries to provide them with arms.

When the popular movement became a daily mobility which was not exclusive to Fridays, the opposition started to give names to other days of the week. For example, "Zainab Al-Hosny's Sunday"<sup>173</sup>, a woman who Al-Jazeera introduced as a victim whom the Syrian security personnel murdered and mutilated her body. "The Tuesday of the detainee Sheikh Nawaf Al-Basheer."<sup>174-175</sup> This is a sign that has an implicit hint which is discrediting the regime's propaganda that tries to assert the loyalty of the sheikhs of the nomadic tribes and clans to it. "A Thursday for Latakia"<sup>176</sup> is an indication that the revolution has reached the Syrian coast, that is, close to the villages of the Alawite sect to which the president belongs. So, this is a signifier that the fall of the regime is handy. "The Eye of the Truth Sunday."<sup>177</sup> This day is a reminder of the photo and video documenters, especially, those who died during their covering of the events. It is a message of gratitude and appreciation to them.

## 14- The Evenings in the Streets and Squares

One of the facets of the revolution in Syria was in the form of demonstrators gathering in one place to sing and cheer tuned slogans in addition sometimes to folkloric Dabka – dancing –

168 29 June 2012. "جمعة وانتقون بنصر الله"

169 29 October 2011. "جمعة الحظر الجوي"

170 15 May 2011. "جمعة الحرائر"

171 17 March 2012. "جمعة النفير"

172 17 March 2012. "جمعة التسليح الفوري"

173 25 September 2011. "أحد زينب الحصني"

174 The head Sheikh of Al-Baggara tribe, which is a widely spread Arab tribe stretching among Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Turkey. It is considered the largest Syrian tribe. This Sheikh was detained by the Syrian security forces.

175 25 September 2011. "ثلاثاء الشيخ المعتقل نواف البشير"

176 25 September 2011. "خميس من أجل اللاذقية"

177 27 November 2011. "أحد عين الحقيقة"

accompanied by using drums. They also used to stand shoulder to shoulder in organized rows and start jumping or swinging with chanting songs or slogans.

These scenes were densely presented on Al-Jazeera screen. Covering this type of popular movement has a lot of significances and an ability to affect the audience. The Syrian people appeared strong, defying the bombardment of tanks, aircrafts, and guns with singing and dancing.

"The people there get indulged into the chants of the revolution."<sup>178</sup> This is an indication of how deep the relationship between the demonstrators and singing as one of their means of expression is. "So, such are the revolutionaries. They cry singing or sing crying."<sup>179</sup> This was a sentimental appeal through which Al-Jazeera wanted to draw the attention of the audience to the importance and role of singing in the revolutionary activity. Songs seemed for the opponents as a shelter where they can empty the charges of their grief and tragedy. "The city people sing during their evenings."<sup>180</sup>, "The demonstrations have changed into evenings."<sup>181</sup>

"Homs has developed its own methods in facing the repression machine, the most prominent of which is singing in facing bullets."<sup>182</sup> This indicates how the revolutionaries insist on the peacefulness of their revolution and that art can face heavy arms. This comparison shows the regime having the ugliest profiles of violence. It also provokes sympathy with the demonstrators who are unarmed and powerless. "The answer of the people to what is described as the language of iron and fire was, as usual, cheers and chants."<sup>183</sup>

(8)



Demonstrators challenge the bombardment of the Syrian army by singing.<sup>184</sup>

The content of the tuned songs and slogans was as follows: grief on those who were murdered, confidence in victory, mocking and disparaging the president and calling on him to step down, or

178 15 January 2012. "ينغمس الحاضرون بأهازيج الثورة"

179 14 October 2011. "أولئك إذن هم الثوار، يكون غناء أو لعلهم يغنون بكاء"

180 04 July 2011, 14 October 2011. "يغني أهل المدينة في أمسياتهم"

181 04 July 2011. "تحولت المظاهرات لأمسيات"

182 11 December 2011. "محض طورت أساليبها الخاصة في مواجهة الآلة القمعية و أبرزها الغناء في مواجهة الرصاص"

183 27 November 2011. "رد الناس على ما يصفونها بلغة الحديد و النار كان كالمعتاد هتافات و أناشيد"

184 15 January 2012.

asserting that the Syrians were soon going to hang him and put an end to tyranny. Al-Jazeera considered that the tragedy in which the citizens live in did not prevent them from innovating mockery of the official claims about *salafis* – orthodox Muslims, infiltrated agents and gangs. Al-Jazeera media personnel did not mock the regime's propaganda through presenting their own points of view but through dense coverage and pointing out of the demonstrators' slogans.

"The darkness of the night does not prevent the infected by the hope disease from urging the dawn to come."<sup>185</sup> The Channel assimilates hope to a disease, a literary style which enlarges the volume of hope in the souls of the Syrians who have been living in darkness for long years and who are still calling out for the dawn of emancipation to come. This is another example where Al-Jazeera borrows “negative” or “destructive” factors from nature in order to describe an event which it considers positive.

"From 5 to 30 songs they produce every day, and from 5 to 30 people fall dead every day. The number of the songs equals the number of the killed<sup>186</sup>." Through this description, Al-Jazeera tries to balance between keeping to create the feelings of grief towards what happens to the demonstrators and pointing out their ability to defy through art.

In these evenings, the Syrians depended on borrowing famous tunes which are favored by the Syrian people and applying revolutionary words to them. They also used short and simple tunes which can be easily memorized. These tuned slogans and songs became one of the most significant means of the revolutionary expression.

The people there were always males. In some evenings, only few veiled women took part in cheering slogans only. Women do not take part in singing or dancing. The female presence in the videos was very rare.

(9)



The participation of women wearing the Sunni hijab in the demonstrations against Assad.<sup>187</sup>

185 04 July 2011. "حلقة الليل لا تمنع المصابين بداء الأمل من حث الفجر على القنوم."

186 14 October 2011. "من 5 إلى 30 أغنية ينتجون كل يوم و كل يوم يسقط من 5 إلى 30 قتيل، يتساوى عدد الأغنيات مع عدد القتلى."

187 14 August 2011.

## 15 - Symbolism of Funerals, Funeral Processions and the Prayers for the Dead

Al-Jazeera prominently focused on covering the funeral processions<sup>188</sup>. It assured their inevitability after demonstrations, with the result that the rituals of burying the deceased became a daily routine. That is, the killing was still persistent. The demonstrations turned into funeral processions and the funeral processions into demonstrations. "The funerals were never safe from repression."<sup>189</sup> "Many a victim fell down during the funeral processions with the result that the funerals were giving birth to other ones."<sup>190</sup> That is, the ones who carry the bodies of the deceased to their final stay could be carried the following day. This is an indication to the gravity of the regime's criminality from which nobody, alive or dead, could escape. Al-Jazeera showed the Syrian People as very loyal to each other. The Channel portrayed that thousands were crowding to have the honor of carrying the coffins of the violence victims in spite of the risk of being killed or detained. This means that there was a people's race as everyone wanted to participate in the burial service, which is a sign of strong loyalty. Despite risks, they rush to carry the martyr's body. In spite of dangers, they shout out 'Allah is the Greatest' and cheer 'No god but Allah. The martyr is Allah's beloved'.

(10)



A demonstration and a funeral ceremony at the same time.<sup>191</sup>

Al-Jazeera linked the thousands coming out after the Friday's prayer to the funeral processions. This is a religious sign suggesting the piety and strong belief of those who took part in the burial services. This has an implicit significance that the believing people were confronting the firing of the disbelieving regime. The media concentration on these signifiers can mobilize the people in a sectarian manner. The Channel showed the opponents performing the funeral processions after the Eid – religious Festival – Prayers. Linking killing to Eid suggests that the regime assaulted the

188 The funeral procession, that is, the service and rituals of accompanying the body of the dead person to its final stay. Muslims have special rituals. A number of men carry the coffin while the others walk cheering: 'there is no God but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God.'

189 25 November 2011. "الجنائزات لم تسلم يوماً من القمع"

190 25 November 2011. "كم من ضحية سقطت أثناء التشييع حتى أضحت الجنائز تلد جنائز"

191 11 April 2011.

symbolism of the Islamic religious occasions and festivals. It also suggests the participants in the processions are performing the holy duty of Salat – prayer, that is, they are obeying God. This is another implicit indication that the conflict is between the believers – the opposition, and the disbelievers – all the pro-regime people.

The rituals of the prayers for the dead were also shown on Al-Jazeera screen, where the outraged men appear carrying the coffins or burying the bodies in the graves while cheering 'Allah is the Greatest.' or shouting out for the murdered martyr 'We kneel only to God.' This is an implicit message directed to the regime telling it that the demonstrators will not be subjugated to any power in the world. It is a defiance message to the security forces who, according to Al-Jazeera, tried to humiliate the people and kill them.

(11)



The demonstrators bury the boy who was killed during a demonstration against Assad.<sup>192</sup>

## 16 – The Numbers of the Demonstrators

On one hand, Al-Jazeera resorted to generalization: "The Syrians came out" (15 times), "the people of the area demonstrated"<sup>193</sup>, "The Syrian People" (6 times), "Crowded demonstrations"<sup>194</sup>. These phrases signified the superiority of the anti-regime sections. They also implicitly indicated to non-recognizing the pro-regime sections. On the other hand, the Channel frequently used definite numbers. For example, it used 'hundreds' to express the number of the praying people who came out from a mosque, 'thousands' to describe a demonstration in a small village, and 'a hundred thousand' to describe a demonstration at an important public square such as the Orontes Square in Hama<sup>195</sup>.

<sup>192</sup> 25 November 2011.

<sup>193</sup> 25 March 2011, 29 March 2011. Synonyms have been repeated 24 times. "أهالي المنطقة تظاهروا"

<sup>194</sup> Four times and synonymous phrases have been repeated 14 times. "مظاهرات حاشدة"

<sup>195</sup> 'The Orontes Square' or 'The Martyrs Square' as the opponents call it. This square also witnessed a military campaign assaulted by the regime forces against the 'Muslim Brothers' in 1982. It is considered a center for the gathering of the demonstrators against the Assad regime. The people of Hama belong to the Muslim Sunni sect.

(12)



Demonstrations which are presented as crowded.<sup>196</sup>

(13)



Demonstrations which are presented as crowded.<sup>197</sup>

## 17 – The Age and Gender Categories of the Participants

The most prominent participants were of the young male category. The female presence was very accidental. The women who appeared were veiled, which is a message that implicitly denotes that the revolution was Sunni. The obvious absence of women from the squares reminded of the rituals of the Sunnis who do not allow women to take part in mixed activities with the males. Most of the photos of women were taken from the back so that they could not show the women's faces. This has the same religious sign: the revolution is that of conservative Muslims.

Women also appear saying prayers against<sup>198</sup> the president. "May Allah take you, Bashar!"<sup>199</sup> that is, they wish the president would be dead. "Freedom forever, forcibly, Oh Assad."<sup>200</sup> Which means that they were certainly going to win their freedom. The word 'forever' is repeatedly

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<sup>196</sup> 30 March 2011.

<sup>197</sup> 07 November 2011.

<sup>198</sup> Muslims believe in saying prayers against the oppressor as God responds to the prayers of the oppressed. The prayers of a woman against the oppressor have a greater effect on the receiver than the man's. She is a weaker creature than the man in accordance with the Islamic creed.

<sup>199</sup> 04 March 2012. "الله ياخذك يا بشار"

<sup>200</sup> 18 February 2012. "حرية للأبد غصب عنك يا أسد"



mentioned in their slogans as a reply, which might be subconscious, to old slogans the people used to reiterate: 'Forever, O Hafez Al-Assad!' and 'Our leader forever is Hafez Al-Assad.' The slogan: "Come on Bashar, Leave!" (6 times) has a stronger effect when expressed by woman. On the one hand, it suggests that a woman is defying the president (the man) in a masculine society. On the other hand, it suggests that women have become impatient with the regime's soldiers assaulting their dignity and womanhood.

Children's presence was also accidental but effective. We watch little kids standing and threatening the Assad: "We're coming, Bashar!"<sup>201</sup> That is: Wait, and see what misfortunes we will bring to you! This juvenile defiance has a great effect, especially when Al-Jazeera mentions these reactions in a context directed to a regime which gives no notice to the innocence of childhood, a regime which kills without any exception whatsoever.

## **18 - The Channel's Promoting of the Coming Revolutionary Activities**

The activists used to promote for their coming revolutionary activities through the social networking sites or their online sites. However, the role of Al-Jazeera was more important than these sites<sup>202</sup> because the Syrian people, especially the opponents, used to permanently watch the Channel around the clock. Al-Jazeera used to point out the times and locations of the coming activities "It is expected that Damascus is going to witness demonstrations which activists considered as crucial in directing the process of the Syrian revolution."<sup>203</sup> Not only did Al-Jazeera point out the timings and locations of the coming events, but also pointed out their importance. These were implicit messages the aim of which was to mobilize the street and encourage the opposing Syrian people to demonstrate.

## **19 - Documentation of Videos**

The videos of the activists are considered the one of the most significant sources of Al-Jazeera. A short time after the start of the popular movement, the demonstrating youth became aware of the importance of the video documentation. They used to publish their videos without captions mentioning the settings of the events. So, the pro-regime channels exploited this shortcoming and promoted that those demonstrations had not taken place in Syria and that the videos were media fabrications. After that the opposing youth began to mention the dates and the places of their activities. Al-Jazeera respected these documentations and nearly always pointed them out. For instance, we saw the demonstration and heard a young man mentioning the date and the place: "Damascus city, the first day of Eid Al-Fitr", "Idleb city, 11 September 2011"; or the demonstrators

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201 25 May 2012. "بشار نحن جايين"

202 The observation of the researcher, who witnessed and lived the events alongside with the rest of the slices of the Syrian society.

203 27 August 2011. "من المتوقع أن تشهد دمشق مظاهرات اعتبرها ناشطون مصلية في توجيه سير الثورة السورية"

would write the date and place of the demonstration on a piece of paper and put it in front of the mobile camera so that the audience could see it.

## 20 - Interviews

In the studied sample, the interviews with the demonstrators were very rare. This suggests that individual opinions were not of interest for the channel. Therefore, the revolution appeared as if it were the voice of unified people. A revolution which is cohesive and non- individualist.

In 2011, Al-Jazeera was not able to send its correspondents to cover the demonstrations. However, even after it could have amateur correspondents in 2012, it did not give attention to the individual opinions of the demonstrators.

## 21- Additional Remarks on the Photos Which Deal with the Opposing Demonstrations

The demonstrations pictures varied. Some were diurnal, others were at nocturnal. Some contained large numbers, others few.

(14)



Night demonstrations described as crowded. The visual content is not clear but the narration guides the recipient's perception of the image.<sup>204</sup>

Sometimes the cadre was narrow, that is, the outer frame (The place of the event) was omitted, only showing the demonstrators. This technique suggests that the number of the demonstrators is large.

Sometimes the news story dealing with the theme of the demonstrations was accompanied by pictures of empty or dark places, that is, pictures having no clear content, which did not show any demonstrations. Simultaneously, we hear people's frightened screams at the time of demonstrations or hear cheers and slogans. Why did Al-Jazeera use that type of pictures which was accompanied by screams which provoked the receiver's feelings when the internet was full of videos which contained clearly delineated demonstrations? I suppose that this type allows the

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204 03 May 2011.

receiver to concentrate more on the screams. Eventually, the screams would be more effective and the effect of the cheers would be doubled. Moreover, the pictures which lack a clear content unleash the imagination of the audience. Subconsciously, the mind would fill the picture with the content convenient to the receiver's psychological condition.

The demonstrations which took place in the mosques were of the most important contents of the pictures on Al-Jazeera screen.

What is called 'flying demonstrations' appeared in Syria. They are short-time demonstrations which might not exceed one or a few minutes because of the severe security measures. The youth who were afraid of the brutality of the regime's forces used to arrange to come out for a very short time so that they could be able of cheering against the regime and Assad and of taking pictures and videos then sharing them on the internet. Al-Jazeera adopted this type of videos where we can see few legs running quickly at night. Nevertheless, the Channel commented saying that a crowded demonstration came out today. That is, the pictures were not compatible with the nature of the news story. This kind of video may have significant psychological influence as the viewer sees only few legs running fast to avoid bullets and hears scared voices while the images tremble because the photographer is running; the viewer -particularly Syrian- may feel himself running and being scared in the darkness.

(15)



Al-Jazeera frequently transmitted shaky, and sometimes unclear, images but the news story guides the recipient's perception of the image.<sup>205</sup>

Al-Jazeera, in a way or another, helped to legalize the assault of the demonstrators on the state's centers such as the 'Forensic Palace'. It portrayed them as people mad with corruption and requesting reformation. That is, there was an actual excuse which motivated them to perform such assaults. Therefore, the pictures of the spoilers seemed acceptable.

205 25 March 2011.

(16)



The demonstrators destroy the government vehicles and attack the Justice Palace in Daraa. The news context does not make the recipient feel that it is wrong to assault the public property.<sup>206</sup>

### How Did Al-Jazeera Cover the Pro-regime Popular Movement?

At the time when all the pro-regime channels were assuring and showing pictures to prove the large size of the human massing which organized processions all over Syria, all over the governorates, cities and villages to support the president Assad and the reformations, Al-Jazeera did not pay any attention to these processions. In the studied sample, it talked about them four times in a brief and rapid manner. Moreover, the contexts in which these processions were handled made this popular movement seem ridiculous, fabricated by the Syrian government and entirely unimportant. For example, Al-Jazeera used to allocate a full report to the anti-regime popular movement. It showed the demonstrators running away from the security personnel's bullets. It let us listen to the sounds of heavy firing and see feet running rapidly due to fear and horror. Then in the last ten seconds of the report, the Channel would mention that many governorates witnessed pro-regime demonstrations.

The ridiculousness of these pro-regime demonstrations also appeared through Al-Jazeera's selectivity of pictures that contained very few numbers of supporters cheering with voices which did not seem that strong. Also, when Al-Jazeera showed pictures of a demonstration<sup>207</sup> containing enormous numbers of Al-Assad supporters, this was put in a news context which tried to prove that these demonstrations were only a reaction to the widespread expansion of the opposing demonstrations, and, eventually, a proof that the regime lost the initiative. The regime could no more control the situation inside the country.

<sup>206</sup> 23 March 2011.

<sup>207</sup> 18 June 2011.

Al-Jazeera very poorly covered the viewpoints of the pro-regime Syrians. After that, it totally absented them and made the Syrian street look as if it were entirely in the opposition side. As if all the Syrian people turned into an angry opposition which wanted the fall of the regime.

The very brief coverage of the supporting popular movement was in the months of March and April 2011. Nevertheless, the target of this coverage was not highlighting the popular backing and support of the regime. The target was, rather, drawing the Arabic and international attention to the fact that the protests divided the Syrian street into two parts. One which opposed to the policies of the government and demanded reformations which would regain the role of the civil society, and another that supported the regime and whose camp did not stand doing nothing but organized pro-regime demonstrations whose organizers marched the streets of the capital and several other governorate centers. Thus, Syria entered a stage which might impose the mobility of international society as the bloody results of this division would be immense and disastrous<sup>208</sup>.

"And the arguments which followed the pro-Assad processions in different parts of Syria were not vacant of suspicions which were reiterated by opponents inside and outside the country stating that the regime might substitute the Emergency Law with another equally bad one."<sup>209</sup>The extremely brief mention of the pro-Assad popular movement can be observed. There is only one sentence in the report. Why did the Channel link the popular processions to the opposition's suspicions about substituting the Emergency Law with a worse one? In the beginning, Al-Jazeera tried to point its credibility out through transmitting all the details of the Syrian crisis. Therefore, it mentioned the pro-Assad popular movement. However, because its editorial policy was against the Syrian regime's policy, and because it always tried to portray the regime as a thug, criminal one which could not be trusted, it had to link supporting the regime by some categories of the people to the opponents' suspicions in regime's credibility in order to sabotage the importance and the role of the supporting movement in the receiver's mind. In reply to the channels that showed the movement which supported Al-Assad and the reforms as one of popular majority, Al-Jazeera tried to assure that the solid ground on which the Syrian leadership stood was not a popular one. It was, rather, the control of this leadership on the military and security institutions which made it stay in charge of everything and withstand the opposing popular movement.

On one single occasion, Al-Jazeera presented the viewpoint of the citizens who supported the Syrian government concerning the opposing movement. They pointed out that the continuation of the demonstrators rushing into the streets was inexcusable even after the authorities had responded to most of their demands and promised to perform more reformations. This continuation would open the way to the enemies of Syria to raise sedition among the citizens<sup>210</sup>. This single presentation suggested how stupid these supporters were to obey and believe the regime's lies since

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208 25 March 2011.

209 29 March 2011.

"و لم يخلو الجدل الذي جاء عشية تنظيم مسيرات تأييد للأرد في مختلف أنحاء سوريا من شكوك ترددت على ألسنة معارضين في الداخل و الخارج و مفادها أن نظام الحكم ربما يستبدل قانون الطوارئ بقانون آخر يساويه سوءاً"

210 11 April 2011.

presenting these ideas had been preceded or was followed by pictures asserting that the regime was killing the demonstrators, murdering the innocent and torturing all those who criticized it. This means that the response of the government was phantasmal and that the reformations were merely invalid media propaganda.

Al-Jazeera showed a single slogan which was adopted by the supporters of the regime "God, Syria, and Bashar only."<sup>211</sup> The significance of this slogan varies according to the Channel which points it out. If it was shown on a pro-Assad screen, it would mean that the people would not agree to any president other than Bashar. However, on Al-Jazeera channel it suggested the authority of the single individual, the system of the single individual, and the subjugation of the people to the will of a single individual.

### **Analyzing the Image of the President and the Ruling Regime as Presented by Al-Jazeera**

#### **What Did the Image of the President Assad Look Like on Al-Jazeera Screen?**

In 2011, Al-Jazeera mentioned many times that Al-Assad inherited the presidency from his father, and that the total period of their rule together extended for more than 4 decades. This reminder signifies the Al-Assads monopoly of the ruling authority.

In the studied sample, Al-Jazeera never allocated full reports of the Assad's declarations or activities. It rather sometimes mentioned him accidentally, which can be an implicit sign of the underestimation of Al-Assad's personality. On other occasions, mentioning Al-Assad took a tiny part of the report. All in all, the personality of Al-Assad was not an important news topic in Al-Jazeera's reports. It rather substituted mentioning the president with the personalization of the regime: "Al-Assad's regime" (14 times), "Al-Assad's government"<sup>212</sup>. That is, the personality of the president was present and absent at the same time. It was implicitly present every time the mention of the regime was linked to Al-Assad's name.

For long years, the Syrian mass media used to create a mental image which portrayed Al-Assad as a strong, intelligent, wise, militant and prestigious person. This was done through focusing on his personality, declarations and activities. When Al-Jazeera disregards the role of this president. That is, when it does not specify full reports talking about his activities, and simultaneously portrays the government as one controlled by a single individual, it produces a new mental image the content of which is as follows: The system in Syria is controlled by one person who is not

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211 25 March 2011. "الله سوريا بشار و بس".

212 08 May 2012. "حكومة الأسد".

worthy of the post of presidency, a foolish, suppressive, bloodthirsty person who does not know how to deal with crises.

"And now, as he delegates his counselors and agents to break good news to the people telling them about some things he intends to do, he reminds us with this approach of his original profession as an ophthalmologist who used to try lenses of various dimensions and sizes before he eventually decided which one was the best to rectify the eyesight. However, because what is required, as the protestors state, is changing the reality not rectifying the way of looking at it, the protestors declared continuing picketing."<sup>213</sup> This paragraph was mentioned in the context of Al-Jazeera's account of the president sending delegations to listen to the demands of the people and to break the good news of implementing a group of reforms in the near future. The Channel disparaged the personality of Al-Assad and his way of dealing with the crisis as he behaved like an ophthalmologist who tries different lenses before he knows which is suitable for the patient's condition. This is a signifier of the uselessness of the regime's response to the popular demands. So, the only solution in Syria is to continue the uprising until the regime falls. The demand of the masses is changing the state of affairs, not correcting the way of looking at it.

Hinting implicitly that the dignity of the president was injured, Al-Jazeera reported that the opponents demanded that Al-Assad should either choose the democratic change which pleases the people, or the history would condemn him as a dictator who encountered the wishes of the people. They also reminded him of the destiny of the Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak<sup>214</sup>. Before the crisis, nobody dared to talk this way about Al-Assad or the government. Now they were threatening the president or trying to frighten him. They were defying him in public. Their fear disappeared and their weakness vanished. That was what Al-Jazeera's messages trying to prove.

Criticizing Al-Assad by Al-Jazeera was not always verbal. It was also done through the tone of the media personnel. For instance, Al-Jazeera may report Al-Assad stating that the reforms were delayed by the routine and carelessness and that the delay was due to understanding priorities as the country suffered from a lot of regional and international pressures<sup>215</sup>. If these statements were presented on a pro-regime channel, they would mean that the Syrian government was a resistant one against the Israeli occupation and that it was exposed to international pressures and economic besiege because of its stance in supporting the Palestinian people. However, on Al-Jazeera's screen, these ideas had another meaning. They were transmitted in a tone suggesting implicit mocking of this propaganda of the regime's. The government was making fun of the people through

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213 29 March 2011.

"و إذ يوفد اليوم مستشاريه وأعوانه ليبشروا الناس ببعض مما يعتزم القيام به، فإن هذا المنهج يعيد التفكير بمهنته الأولى كطبيب عيون إعتاد أن يجرب عدسات كثيرة و مختلفة الأبعاد و المقاسات قبل أن يقرر في الأخير أيها منها تصلح لتصحيح النظر. و لأن المطلوب على ما يقول المحتجون هو تغيير الواقع لا تصحيح النظر إليه، أعلن محتجون مواصلة الإعتصام."

214 28 April 2011.

215 30 March 2011.

popularizing these ideas in order to be an excuse for the mistakes and the corruption which prevails in the Syrian state's structure.

"Al-Assad's legitimacy has nearly ended"<sup>216</sup>, "Al-Assad has no legitimacy"<sup>217</sup>, These phrases indicate that Al-Assad was no more the president of Syria. No negotiations should be held with him. The legitimate substitute whom the people would elect should be chosen and appointed by the people. "The president Assad is facing a real dilemma."<sup>218</sup> This is a significance of the president's weakness and of his inability to manage the Syrian crisis. This is also a significance of the narrow choices he has. His only option is to quit the authority. "The Syrian president tells his visitors that the Syrian crisis which Syria is undergoing is over. The opponents reply that it will be over only after he has left."<sup>219</sup>

"The Syrian president repudiates these military forces. The Lieutenant General Bashar Al-Assad, the Supreme Commander of the Army and Armed Forces says that these forces are not his. He is not responsible for the repression and the mistakes which the officials are making."<sup>220</sup> These are statements which hide grievous criticism and have implicit ridicule of the president's personality. Al-Jazeera reminds that Al-Assad is the Lieutenant General, the Supreme Commander of the Army and Armed Forces. That is, he is the leader without whose knowledge and orders nothing should happen. But he is a leader who skips responsibility. Moreover, he considers the mistakes as individual ones which do not represent the regime. They do not represent the orders of this leader.

The revolution, for the president Assad, is a universal conspiracy. It is one which lacks thinkers and real leaders. This was how Al-Jazeera highlighted the attitudes of Assad towards the opposing popular movement.

The Channel's correspondents conducted interviews with civilians who assured their dislike of Al-Assad. They expressed their wrath with his policy towards the crisis. A civilian man from Aleppo said: "Nobody likes him one per cent. I wished to see anybody who praised him. When someone loses control over their minds, they start killing their families. That's what this man is doing. May Allah save us from him! Allah is sufficient for me, Most Excellent is He in whom I trust."<sup>221</sup> This is an unequivocal assurance of the hatred of the Syrian president by all the people's categories. He is an insane person who has lost control over his mind and that's why killing the people has become not only normal but also necessary in order to keep his throne safe. The civilian also resorts to God and asks Him to put an end to Al-Assad. 'Allah is sufficient for us, Most

<sup>216</sup> 04 June 2011. "ثورة الأسد شارفت على الانتهاء"

<sup>217</sup> 24 July 2011. "الأسد لا يتمتع بالشرعية"

<sup>218</sup> 07 July 2011. "الرئيس الأسد يواجه مأزقاً حقيقياً"

<sup>219</sup> 04 October 2011. "يقول الرئيس السوري بشار الأسد لزواره إن الأزمة التي تمر فيها سوريا انتهت، و يرد معارضون أنها لن تنتهي إلا برحيله"

<sup>220</sup> 07 December 2011.

<sup>221</sup> "يتبرأ الرئيس السوري مما تفعله هذه القوات العسكرية، فالفرق بين الرئيس بشار الأسد القائد الأعلى للجيش والقوات المسلحة يقول إن هذه القوات ليست قواته وإنه غير مسؤول عن القمع والأخطاء التي يرتكبها المسؤولون."

"ما في إنسان بحبه واحد بالمية، تمنيت شوف إنسان يمدح منه، لما الشخص يفقد السيطرة على عقله يصير يقتل أهله و هاد هيك عم يساوي. الله بخلصنا منه، حسينا الله و نعم الوكيل."



Excellent is He in whom we trust' is a signifier that people depend on God and trust His justice. They are also sure that He is to bring their victory over the oppressor. Only God supports them.

(17)



The man expresses the hatred of the people to Assad.<sup>222</sup>

## The Regime's Image

In the studied news reports, Al-Jazeera absolutely concentrated on the regime's security and military actions, whereas the political activities or the activities related to ministries or the dialogue conferences were absent.

### 1 – Special Names for the Regime and Its Forces

Al-Jazeera linked the Syrian government, the security forces, the army, the official civilian and military posts etc. to the personality of the president or to his family. It portrayed that everything was governed and controlled by him. "Al-Assad's regime" (14 times), "Al-Assads' regime" (twice), "Al-Assad's battalions" (3 times), "Al-Assad's government"<sup>223</sup>, these are signifiers of how enormous the hegemony of the individual or the sect is. It is an absolute dictatorship as this ruling individual has the power to burn and destroy everything for the sake of his safety and that of the minority he belongs to. These descriptions help to demonize the Syrian government and to destroy the mental image of having a state in Syria. That is, there is no state. There is rather a regime subjugated to a tyrant individual who spreads fear and terror and employs a group of pro-regime supporters, who come from a religious background, to seize Syria.

Al-Jazeera's selectivity of the names of the military divisions of the regime also helped to infix this idea. For example, the Channel used to concentrate on the Fourth Armored Division<sup>224</sup> and add that it is led by the Brigadier General Maher Al-Assad who is the brother of the Syrian

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<sup>222</sup> 12 September 2012.

<sup>223</sup> 08 May 2012.

<sup>224</sup> 05 May 2011, 01 October 2013.

president. This highlighting has two significances. The first is that the regime is using the strongest military divisions to fight his people. The second is that the Syrian army is a family institution whose task is the protection of the president and his family and to confront the people who refuse to be subjugated to this family.

Al-Jazeera highlighted the term 'Shabbiha' (41 times) which was applied to the forces which were active on military and security tasks in favor of the regime. This word is a significance that the regime is using illegal armed groups who serve an individual or a sect. It is a significance that this rule is a bully bizarre one who uses gangs like the Mafia who terrify and blackmail the Syrian people and practice the dirtiest and filthiest sorts of pressure so that they might yield to the will of the ruler.

"The gangs of the tyrant Bashar Al-Assad"<sup>225</sup>, "The Al-Assad gangs"<sup>226</sup>, "The blundering thugs."<sup>227</sup> The concept of 'gangs' indicates small groups of law-breakers who assault people and plunder their properties and spread terror in the society. Therefore, people hate them. The channel's portraying the army and security personnel this way is meant to mobilize the society against them.

Al-Jazeera concurrently mentioned the terms of "the security", "the army", "pro-Assad militias". This is an implicit message the purpose of which is to make all the state's security and military bodies seem fully engaged in suppressing the people. They all work hand in hand to kill the citizens. The army bombard while the security detain. Shabiha hang while the militias plunder the properties. All these things happen simultaneously.

Al-Jazeera employed terms such as 'the regime's forces' (63 times), 'Al-Assad's forces' (3 times), 'forces' (3 times) which include the security sector, the army and all the other armed categories. This signifies the unity of all the sectors around one aim which killing the armless citizens.

## 2 – Descriptions of the Security Activities

Al-Jazeera repeatedly mentioned a group of terms and phrases in describing the regime's military and security actions. These are the most prominent of them: "The military campaign" (7 times) that is the army is performing organized military operations against innocent, armless people. This is an implicit message through which Al-Jazeera tries to state that military campaigns are usually performed against an enemy. But in the case of the Syrians, these campaigns are rather operations against oppressed people. "The spread of the security campaigns"<sup>228</sup>, "The violent security campaign"<sup>229</sup> are significances of the regime's practices of murder, detainment, frightfully and savagely assaulting of homes. They are also indications of the collapse of the moral systems

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225 21 February 2013. "عصابات الطاغية بشار الأسد"

226 02 August 2012. "عصابات أسدية"

227 02 August 2012. "عصابات التشليح"

228 14 August 2011, 12 September 2011. "اتساع الحملات الأمنية"

229 10 August 2011. "الحملات الأمنية العنيفة"

in the security sector as the role of security personnel has changed from protecting the citizens to assaulting them.

"A large-scale incursion"<sup>230</sup> that is, the entrance of the security forces by coercion and oppression. This is an implicit message the purpose of which is denying the legitimacy of the regime's actions. It is a reply to the propaganda of confronting armed groups which try to destroy the country. "Military escalation"<sup>231</sup> which signifies that the regime has increased the doses of its bombardment and assault of the civil areas. During the escalation, the numbers of victims, the injured and destroyed houses rise. Fear and horror prevail everywhere, in addition to the paralysis of the public life and institutional interruption. Escalation is a hint of the increase of the criminality of the armed forces.

"The bullets of the security guns"<sup>232</sup> is a phrase mentioned by Al-Jazeera while talking about the deceased. For example, they were killed by the bullets of the security guns. The Channel also mentions this phrase while talking about the demonstrators: 'they are confronting the bullets of the security guns'. This phrase has an implicit indication that the bullets of the security are supposed to spread a feeling of safety and reassurance as one of the duties of the security is to protect the people, but the function of the security sector is deformed in the Syrian situation.

"The repression machine"<sup>233</sup> is a significance that the members of the army and the security are tools in the regime's hand which it uses to abolish the popular ambitions.

"A number of tanks is heading towards center of the city."<sup>234</sup> Al-Jazeera wanted to suggest to the audience that the regime has put its killing tools near the public services centers which usually exist in the city centers. The normal position of tanks is on the fronts to confront the enemy of the country. However, the Syrian army has changed its direction towards the lawns of the parks, the pavements and public squares of the cities.

"The flow of tanks and personnel carriers"<sup>235</sup> that is, the fast and dense deployment like water flowing everywhere with no way of stopping it. This is a metaphor of the regime's large-scale military operations. In this example, Al-Jazeera has borrowed a "positive" element from nature (flow, fertility) to describe an event which it considers negative.

"The positioning of a convoy of tanks"<sup>236</sup> suggests the surveillance of the regime's forces of their enemy, the demonstrators, like a predator observing its prey from a remote place. "The regime's tanks have been moving since dawn"<sup>237</sup> an image which suggests that the army is

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230 10 August 2011. "اجتياح واسع"

231 14 August 2011. "تصعيد عسكري"

232 27 August 2011. "رصاصة بنادق الأمن"

233 12 September 2011. "آلة القمع"

234 10 August 2011. "عدد من الدبابات يتوجه إلى وسط المدينة"

235 05 August 2011, 18 June 2011. "تنفق الدبابات و الناقلات"

236 10 August 2011. "تمركز رتل من الدبابات"

237 02 October 2012. "دبابات النظام تتحرك منذ ساعات الصباح الأولى"

deploying its forces while the people are deeply sleeping or while the peaceful families are watching all this deployment fearfully. This is a significance that the regime's forces are mercilessly brutalizing the people.

"A noticeable development in the course of the fire ball that rolled from Daraa to various areas of the country."<sup>238</sup> A figurative image in which Al-Jazeera has likened the snow ball which starts small and then, when it rolls, it gets bigger and bigger, to a fire ball, which indicates that the repression of the regime did not stop in the first governorate which rebelled against it. The repression rather spread to all the parts of Syria.

"The scenes of killing are still going on"<sup>239</sup>, "The continuity of bloodshed"<sup>240</sup>, "The military campaign on cities and towns have been going on non-stop"<sup>241</sup>. These are to say that the regime keeps shedding the blood of its people without any restraint.

"The hell of the army's operations."<sup>242</sup> Here, Al-Jazeera likened the regime's military activities to Hell to signify how hard the unbearable agony is. Fire is burning the people from all sides. "A day featured as bloody"<sup>243</sup> is a signifier that the regime is committing crimes. "Bloody repression" that killing is the method the regime uses to keep the people away from its desires. It has no peaceful solutions as its only language is that of fire and iron, according to the channel<sup>244</sup>.

When it described the regime's actions, Al-Jazeera depended on exaggeration and magnification. "Extreme use of power"<sup>245</sup>, "extreme violence"<sup>246</sup>, "a regime which has crossed all redlines in repressing its people"<sup>247</sup>, "the authority has gone far and deep into the security solution"<sup>248</sup>, "the violence wheel is running fast"<sup>249</sup>, "a military campaign which is the most violent for months in order to intrude a part of the town"<sup>250</sup>, "the densification of the bombardment by the regime's forces"<sup>251</sup>, "the destructive force of bombardment."<sup>252</sup>

238 11 April 2011. "تطور لافت في مسار كرة النار التي تخرجت من درعا إلى مختلف أنحاء البلاد."

239 25 March 2011. "مشاهد القتل لا تزال ماثلة."

240 15 May 2011. "استمرار إراقة الدماء."

241 13 May 2013. "بلا انقطاع تتواصل الحملة العسكرية النظامية على مدن و بلدات."

242 04 October 2011. "جسيم عمليات الجيش."

243 25 March 2011. "يوم اتسم بالدموية."

244 27 November 2011.

245 27 August 2011. "الاستخدام المفرط للقوة."

246 27 August 2011. "العنف المفرط."

247 02 September 2011. "نظام جاوز كل الخطوط الحمراء في قمع شعبه."

248 24 July 2011, 12 September 2011. "توغل السلطة في الحل الأمني."

249 02 September 2011. "عجلة العنف تدور بسرعة."

250 03 March 2013. "حملة عسكرية هي الأعنف منذ أشهر لاقتحام حي."

251 06 June 2013. "تكتيف قوات النظام للقصف."

252 04 March 2013. "القوة التدميرية في القصف."

"Scenes of violence"<sup>253</sup>, "Bombarding increases the gloominess of the Syrian scene"<sup>254</sup>. These metaphors state that Syria has turned into a theater or a movie prevailed by the scenes of criminality and horror. The Channel also repeated phrases: "The scene is played again"<sup>255</sup>, "The same scene is replayed."<sup>256</sup> Repetition here means that the same thing is happening several times either in the same region or in others.

"The regime is committing crimes against humanity"<sup>257</sup> (4 times), "It is violating the laws and the human rights"<sup>258</sup> (5 times), "Its actions are close to be described as genocide, but nothing has changed"<sup>259</sup>. These statements have an implicit objection to the attitude of the other countries for not resorting to radical solutions to put an end to the ruling regime. The regime is fighting "a full-scale war against the people"<sup>260</sup>, "a persistence to kill"<sup>261</sup> persistence means committing all forms of violence and terrifying. This is a significance that the regime is firmly pursuing its criminal behavior. "The bombardment increases the blackness of the Syrian Scene"<sup>262</sup> is a message full of darkness in which Syria seems gloomy and lifeless.

## 2 -1 – The Regime's Reaction to the Demonstrations

The Channel stated that "The regime's forces tried to extinguish the protests with force"<sup>263</sup> or "tried to extinguish the revolution"<sup>264</sup>. This is an indication that the popular movement is like the fire which can burn the regime and destroy it. Therefore, it employs all its energy to put it out. This mental image would be considered a violent one; the regime's fire extinguishes that of the opposition. This is not logical, but the channel adopted this imagery in order to emphasize the severity of the Syrian situation.

"Confronting the demonstrators with bullets and bombs."<sup>265</sup> On the one hand, this is a significance of the peacefulness of the revolution. On the other hand, it indicates that the regime is shedding the blood of the armless demonstrators. "The determination to repress the peaceful protests"<sup>266</sup> that is, the methods of handling the demonstrations by the Syrian forces have not changed. They still apply the policy of killing and detainment.

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253 12 September 2011. "مشاهد العنف"

254 31 October 2013. "القصف يزيد من قتامة المشهد السوري"

255 25 March 2011, 04 March 2012. "يتكرر المشهد"

256 12 September 2011, 04 March 2012. "ذات المشهد يتكرر"

257 النظام يرتكب مجازر ضد الإنسانية"

258 "ينتهك القوانين و حقوق الإنسان"

259 03 July 2012. "أفعاله تقترب من وصف الإبادة لكن شينا لا يتغير"

260 12 June 2012. Twice. "حرب شاملة على الشعب"

261 24 July 2011. "إمعان في القتل"

262 31 October 2013. "القصف يزيد من قتامة المشهد السوري"

263 23 March 2011. "قوات النظام حاولت بالقوة إخماد الاحتجاجات"

264 25 October 2011. "حاولت إخماد الثورة"

265 25 March 2011. "التصدي للمتظاهرين بالرصاص و القنابل"

266 10 August 2011, 29 June 2012. "الإصرار على قمع الاحتجاجات السلمية"

(18)



A Syrian army tank is heading to face the demonstrators.<sup>267</sup>

(19)



The soldiers of the Syrian army go into the fields in order to suppress the demonstrators.<sup>268</sup>

The regime is still executing large-scale and arbitrary campaigns against the demonstrators and activists, assaulting and humiliating them. It is still murdering the detainees and burning the lodgings of the demonstrators and the families of the activists in order to defeat the popular movement. This is an indication that the regime is applying all forms of pressure on the people so that they might stop demonstrating.

(20)



The security forces seem brutal during their torturing the demonstrators in the street.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> 27 April 2011.

<sup>268</sup> 17 May 2011.

<sup>269</sup> 11 April 2011.

(21)



The security forces run over the demonstrators and torture them in a brutal way.<sup>270</sup>

"The regime forces are trying to bury the protests alive"<sup>271</sup> is a significance that the regime is a macho father who belongs to the classical (Jahili) age, burying a little newborn girl – the revolution – alive<sup>272</sup>.

The army and security forces humiliate the citizens who went out demonstrating. Then they popularize the videos of this humiliation on a large scale. This is a signifier the purpose of which is criticizing the regime soldiers who boast of humiliating the people and publish visual folders on the internet showing their excitement and bragging while torturing the detainees.

(22)



The security forces' humiliation of the demonstrators. The detainees get water only after glorifying Assad.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> 11 April 2011.

<sup>271</sup> 14 August 2011. "قوات النظام تحاول وند الاحتجاج"

<sup>272</sup> Female infanticide 'Wa'd in Arabic' is burying the newborn girl alive. Arabs in Al-Jahili era before Islam used to practice it because they preferred boys and because they believed that girls would bring them shame and poverty.

<sup>273</sup> 20 June 2011.

## 2 – 2 – The Regime's Actions Against the Civilians

It murders women, children, and unarmed civilians. It commits massacres, breaks into houses, and assaults civilians. the Channel frequently used the verb "assault" without giving details about the mechanism and the nature of this assault. This generalization allows the human imagination to draw different mental pictures about the mis-governance of this regime. "The forces don't respect the elders nor the inviolability of the private homes."<sup>274</sup> That is, the soldiers don't have any moral control. "Shabbiha destroy the doors of a number of shops in order to force the people to open them."<sup>275</sup> This is a signifier that the regime is practicing violence against those who keep striking, and a significance that it is afraid of the economic collapse.

According to Al-Jazeera, the regime is besieging the cities and the villages, and continues with its suffocating and severe besiege, preventing the relief organizations from entering and providing aids. It is cutting out the medicines and food aids on the various areas. It also prevents providing the bakeries with flour.

"The regime continues bombarding"<sup>276</sup>, "dense bombardment" (4 times), "The army has intensified bombarding"<sup>277</sup>, "The bombarding is renewed"<sup>278</sup>, phrases indicate that the rockets and bombs are 'falling' cats and dogs from the sky of Syria. "The regime assaults the cities to prevent civilians from being displaced"<sup>279</sup> is an indication of the increase of the regime's brutality; not only does it kill the demonstrators but also the displacement-seekers. "Revenge actions against those who stay in their lodgings"<sup>280</sup> that is, against those who had not been displaced yet. This is a significance that the soldiers are killing all the Syrians without exception, whether or not for cause.

The regime conducts death sentences by the firing squads, burns the people alive, burns homes and robs villages. This means that the army violates the trust given to it as its duty is protecting the people's property. But in fact, it plunders and robs them. "The soldiers seize the displaced people's homes."<sup>281</sup>

"Random firing"<sup>282</sup> is a phrase which provokes horror and worry as people cannot expect where bullets may come from and when they might die. "The fire of shelling devours the buildings."<sup>283</sup> This is a metonymy of the hunger of the fire, that is, the hunger of the regime and its desire to destroy everything. The burnt and destroyed buildings seem like food for the brutal soldiers.

274 04 October 2011. "القوات لا تحترم الكبار بالعمر و لا حرمة البيت."

275 11 December 2011. "شبيحة يحطمون أبواب عدد من المحال المغلقة لإجبار الناس على فتحهم."

276 10 times and synonymous sentences have been repeated 9 times. "النظام يواصل القصف."

277 10 May 2013; twice, 06 June 2013. "تشد الجيش قصفه"

278 29 June 2012, 18 June 2013. "يتجدد القصف."

279 12 March 2012. "يقتحم المدن لمنع خروج النازحين"

280 18 June 2011. "أعمال الانتقام يرتكبها بحق من يبقوا في مكانهم."

281 14 June 2012. "يستولي الجنود على بيوت النازحين."

282 29 June 2012. "إطلاق نار عشوائي."

283 31 October 2013. "نيران القصف تلتهم المباني."



"Field liquidations and executions" (8 times) is a significance of committing crime openly and in public before the very eyes of the people. This means that the regime on purpose intends to terrify the people more and more, or it is not ashamed of its actions so it practices them in public. "Slaughtering the civilians with knives" (4 times) is a signifier of savageness and sadism. The regime does not quench its thirst by using modern weapons like bullets which can kill from remote places. It also commits ancient methods of killing such as slaughter which enable the murderer of hearing the moaning of their victim and of seeing their blood and conceiving their pain. "Mutilation of bodies" (7 times) an indication that the killing does not feed the soldiers appetites; therefore, they resort to cutting the bodies of the killed people apart and to maiming them. This is a metonymy of the intensive criminality.

"A chemical tragedy the description of whose brutality ran out of all possible expressions"<sup>284</sup>an indication of the regime's use of chemical bombs against the civilians. Al-Jazeera indicated the inability of language to describe this action. It did not explicitly mention the subject (regime) but it made use of the contexts to identify the actor.

(23)



The security forces' killing of the civilians and mutilating their dead bodies.<sup>285</sup>

"The regime bombs the places in which there is not any armed person" (54 times), an implicit message the purpose of which is to refute the veracity of the regime's propaganda about its confronting armed people who are destroying the country. Al-Jazeera's reports also contained interviews with civilians explaining how the regime bombards them although they are not armed. "The violence of the bombardment of the regular Syrian forces increases day by day."<sup>286</sup> Al-Jazeera did not mention the reasons of increasing the rate of this bombardment like, for example, the increase of the power of the armed opposition. It rather only referred to the regime's dense bombardment, which suggests for the audience that all the attacks of the Syrian army are against weak and powerless civilians.

284 21 August 2013. "تراجيديا كيميائية استنفذت كل العبارات لوصف وحشيته"

285 07 July 2011

286 14 January 2013. "يزداد قصف القوات السورية النظامية عنفا يوما بعد يوم"

Al-Jazeera portrayed that the regime callously bombards to retrieve a region. This indicates that the army has lost balance because of the accumulated losses. "This tank has stopped and, through the movement of its turret, it seems clearly that it is seeking a new target where it can send the missiles fed in it. It's searching again."<sup>287</sup> This literary style is a simile that portrays the tank like a beast waiting, and the opponents like the prey.

In accordance to Al-Jazeera's coverage, the regime bombs and burns agricultural lands, and sets fire to the forests. This is a signifier that nothing on the Syrian land is safe from the regime's barbarian policy. The regime seems as if it were trying to destroy the opposition with all its power even if it had to burn every hand span of Syria. "It is bombarding the castles"<sup>288</sup> is a signifier of underestimating the historical ruins, and a significance that the regime is not interested in heritage monuments. It is ready to destroy everything where the opposition forces might be entrenched.

"It cuts off all the means of communication"<sup>289</sup> (5 times), "Jamming all the devices of communication"<sup>290</sup>, an indication that the regime isolates the Syrians from the interior and exterior communications. The regime fears that the means of communication may help in organizing the opposition activities and in coordination among its fractions.

"It assaults and bombs hospitals" (3 times) is a signifier of a high criminal rate and a low ethical rate. The regular soldiers bomb the centers which treat the injured and the sick, and kill the doctors.

The channel stated 12 times that the Syrian army is air raiding the bakeries and that causing the starvation of the people is one of the regime's war instruments. The regular forces bombard the people with rockets while the people are in the queue waiting for their turn to get their bread. This is a significance that encompasses a sentimental appeal in favor of the opposing armless people who wait in front of the bakeries for long hours seeking the loaf of bread. Al-Jazeera assured that targeting bakeries was not done by chance or by mistake. It was, rather, premeditated and purposeful.

"The regime bombards olive press plants."<sup>291</sup> This indicates that the regime bombs the local food sources. It is fighting the people by targeting the sources of their livelihood, disparaging their lives. "It knocks schools down" (5 times) is a signifier that the regular forces bombard the education centers, intellectually stagnating the people, depriving the children from their right to learn, and destroying the intellectual infrastructure as well.

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<sup>287</sup> 03 July 2012. "توقفت هذه الدبابة و من خلال حركة برجها يبدو واضحا أنها تبحث عن هدف جديد تضع فيه ما تلتقمه من قذائفها، إنها تعاود البحث"

<sup>288</sup> 12 September 2011. "يقصف القلاع"

<sup>289</sup> "يقطع جميع الاتصالات"

<sup>290</sup> 12 September 2011. "التشويش على أجهزة الإتصال"

<sup>291</sup> 30 November 2012. "النظام يقصف معاصر الزيتون"

"Shabbiha wreak havoc on the city"<sup>292</sup> is an indication of the lowness and degradation of the ruling regime. Illegal armed forces are killing, threatening, and blackmailing people in order to realize the aims of the Syrian leadership. According to this statement, the regime does not only use the army soldiers and the security personnel in order to terrify the people, but it also resorts to employing corrupt gangs which devastate all the places they enter.

Al-Jazeera used the word 'continue'. For example, "The regime's forces continue bombarding" or "The army continues detaining" (19 times). This shows that the violence uninterruptedly endures. The audience may feel that Syria is burning with the fires of the Syrian army 24/24 hours.

The Channel indicated that the regime arrested people who belonged to Arab and western nationalities most of whom are journalists. This is, on one hand, an indication of the censorship the Syrian security imposes on media, and of having no exceptions in applying the repressing security policy on the other hand. That is, the regime arrests all those who oppose its opinions and attitudes even if they did not belong to the Syrian nationality.

On Al-Jazeera's screen, the regime is accused of committing mass murder operations. This is through its coverage of news handling finding mass graves. This news suggests that the murderer hid the bodies of his victims in order to conceal the evidence of his crimes. It also suggests disparaging the value of the human being. The scene of the accumulated bodies suggests that the murderer considers them as if they were insects which have no value in the society.

(24)



Discovering a mass grave committed by the regime.<sup>293</sup>

"The regime enshrines the security disorder"<sup>294</sup> is a significance that the prevailing chaos in Syria is planned by the regime which uses it as pretext to justify its military actions against the civilians.

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292 11 December 2011. "شبيحة يعيثون فسادا في المدينة"

293 17 May 2011.

294 10 May 2012. "النظام يكرس الإنفلات الأمني"

"Executing dissidents, demonstrators, civilians" (10 times). Death penalty had been officially cancelled in Syria as it was in different countries. The channel's use of the term 'execute' indicates its desire to present an image of a regime which immediately kills its opinion opponents using illegal methods.

The regime uses the Cultural Centers as detention places and security centers. This is a significance that the regular prisons are full of detainees. Therefore, the security personnel need more and more centers for repressing the people.

The dramatizing policy with which Al-Jazeera covered the Syrian crisis included anticipation of events and fear-mongering towards what was going to happen next. It tried to arouse fear against entering new areas by the army, against a massacre, a chemical bombing, rapes, assaults, etc. This way of portraying things makes the audience feel that death is inevitably on the way. At the same time, Al-Jazeera reported that the Syrians wished that these fears would not become true. For example, the Channel may talk of the likelihood of a chemical attack performed by the regime's forces. Then adds talking that the Syrian people hope that the regime will not perform that chemical adventure whose disastrous results may exceed all limits<sup>295</sup>. This style provokes fear, horror, watch, and stress so much as it will lead the people to believe that the regime is going to perform a new criminal action. When Al-Jazeera states that "The Syrians hope that this disaster may not take place"<sup>296</sup>, "Syrians hope that the regime would not use the chemical weapon"<sup>297</sup> and "The Syrians are waiting for a miracle that changes the situation of their country and rids them of what they suffer from."<sup>298</sup>

The Syrian citizen may subconsciously feel that the news represents them, represents their wishes and their fears. So, the news is true and should be believed. Sowing fear was not only confined to the Syrian interior, but Al-Jazeera also indicated that the conflict area was going to expand to reach the neighboring countries. The developments of the crisis in Syria indicate that it was likely to turn into a regional crisis. This proactive approach has started since the first months of the crisis in 2011 when the armed conflict did not begin strongly.

### 3- Linking the Actions of the Regime's Forces to Religious Icons

Al-Jazeera's coverage is full of messages suggesting that the regime is the enemy of Islam. The regular forces besiege, assault, bomb and destroy the mosques. That is, the regime is the enemy of God. Muslims believe that mosques are the homes of God on earth. "The regime bombards the minarets."<sup>299</sup> Minarets are an important religious Islamic symbol. Through it, the muezzin calls to

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295 18 September 2012.

296 05 September 2013. "السوريون يرجون عدم وقوع هذه الكارثة"

297 05 September 2012. "يأمل السوريون ألا يستخدم النظام السلاح الكيميائي"

298 21 September 2013. "السوريون ينتظرون معجزة تغير حال بلدهم و تخلصهم مما هم فيه"

299 11 December 2013. "النظام يقصف المآذن"

prayer. That is, they do the task of summoning Muslims to perform Salat Al-Jama'ah (congregational prayer).

The regime destroys the historical libraries of the mosques. These libraries contain valuable old historical Islamic books and scripts which include the city's history over the ages. This is a signifier of a barbaric regime, which does not respect history and tries to destroy the Muslim Sunni's reference books, which in turn enshrines the religious illiteracy. "Now the mosque is receiving the regime's rockets instead of worshippers."<sup>300</sup>, "Minarets are being destroyed but the sound of Adhan – calling for prayers – does not stop, and the loudspeakers are being substituted by the throats in the destroyed mosques in Syria during a month when mosques have been crowded by worshippers."<sup>301</sup>, "Syria has been famous all over the Arab and Islamic worlds for having a lot of minarets and mosques. The paradox is that it is today famous for the number of destroyed mosques; by Assad regime, which has exceeded 1450 ones."<sup>302</sup>, "All this damage in the Omayyad Mosque was not a result of an earthquake. It was, rather, a result of rockets which targeted an old civilization which dates back to hundreds of years."<sup>303</sup>, "The regular forces mined the mosque and withdrew."<sup>304</sup> These are signifiers which indicate the extreme hatred and scorn of the regular forces towards the religious Islamic symbols. They not only bomb the mosques, but also mine them when they have to withdraw. This news coverage can have inflammatory and provocative impact on the feelings of the Muslims who cherish their religion and consequently leads them to defend it through protecting their worship places.

The regime's forces assault and kill the mosques' religious ministers (Khatib) and the worshippers. They slaughter mosques' Imams with knives. This means that the soldiers commit the most awful barbaric and aggressive methods of murder.

On Al-Jazeera screen, the regime destroys, starves people, murders in the holy month of Ramadan – the fasting month, on Al-Qadr Night – the Night of Power, on festivals and religious occasions. "Escalation of attacks in the month of Ramadan"<sup>305</sup> is a significance of the armed forces carelessness towards the holiness of the month of Ramadan. The soldiers even increase the severity of their violence and murder. "Killing on Al-Qadr Night inside the mosques"<sup>306</sup> is a signifier of the persistence of the regime in the desecration of the Islamic religious occasions with nothing to deter it from committing murder.

"The regime forces forcibly entered the mosque and assaulted its Imam, Sheikh Osama Al-Rifaie on Al-Qadr Night"<sup>307</sup>, this statement and others like it can mobilize the Muslims more and

300 14 July 2013. "الجامع بات يستقبل صواريخ النظام بدلا من المصلين"

301 14 July 2013. "تُدمّر المآذن و لا ينقطع صوت الأذان و تنوب الحناجر عن مكبرات الصوت في المساجد المهتدة في سوريا في شهر كانت تعمر فيه المساجد بالمصلين"

302 14 July 2013. "اشتهرت سوريا بكثرة مآذنها و مساجدها على مستوى العالمين العربي و الإسلامي و المفارقة أنها تشتهر اليوم بأعداد المساجد التي دمرها نظام الأسد و التي تتجاوز 1450 مسجد"

303 14 July 2013. "لم يلحق كل هذا الخراب بمسجد بني أمية جراء الزلزال بل كان بسبب صواريخ طالت حضارة تعود لمئات السنين"

304 11 December 2013. "القوات النظامية لغمت المسجد ثم انسحبت"

305 14 August 2011, 27 August 2011. "تصعيد الهجوم بشهر رمضان"

306 27 August 2011. "القتل في ليلة القدر داخل المساجد"

307 27 August 2011. "قوات النظام اقتحمت الجامع و اعتدت بالضرب على إمامه الشيخ إمامة الرفاعي في ليلة القدر"

more against the regime. They can also fuel the sectarian hatred between the Sunni Muslims and the other sects whose people support the regime. These statements assure that the regime is the enemy of God in three ways. First, it entered the mosque, the home of God, forcibly. Secondly, it assaulted the Imam, Al-Rifai, who is one of the greatest Muslim Sunni Damascene scholars. Thirdly, this was on Al-Qadr Night, the blessed and holy night for Muslims. The regime kills people on Fridays and after performing Jumaa prayer. This is an indication that the disbelieving regime kills the opposing Muslims, the pious worshippers.

Al-Jazeera showed that despite the destruction and devastation which was done to most of the mosques, some Syrians did not show passivity towards performing their prayers in the mosques even if they did not exceed the number of the fingers of one hand. This is a significance that of the Syrians' loyalty to the duties of Islam, one of which is the perseverance on prayers.

Al-Jazeera stated that the regime burns the Qurans. That is, it burns the holy book, the book of God. In a video, a young man appears carrying a burnt Quran: "Do you see, O world, O Arabs, O Muslims? These are Qurans, O Arabs, O world! Where are you, Muslims! Where are you?"<sup>308</sup> That is, O Muslims! Look how the enemy of Allah has burnt the Muslims' holy book. This is a sentimental appeal the aim of which is fueling the feelings of Muslims and making them take practical steps to put an end to the ruling regime. One repeatedly hears men shouting out 'Allah is the Greatest!' after the regime's forces bombard a place, especially mosques.

In a video<sup>309</sup>, we can see the regime's soldiers climbing the wall of a building in order to forcibly enter it. We hear the voice of a young girl reading the Quran, which is a habit Muslims practice to protect themselves. They believe that if they read some verses from the Quran, God protects them and keeps them away from all evils. This video can provoke the feelings of the Islamic community, especially due to the trembling voice of the girl, which suggests that the regime's soldiers are going to practice all types of assault against her.

(25)



The security forces assault houses by jumping over the walls.<sup>310</sup>

308 29 December 2012. "شايخين يا عالم شايخين يا عرب يا اسلام، مصاحف، يا عرب يا عالم مصاحف هي و لك وينكن أنتو يا مسلمين وينكن"

309 26 July 2011.

310 26 July 2011.

Al-Jazeera mentioned historical icons related to the regions where the events took place. For instance, in Homs, the Channel recurrently pointed out the relation of this city to the shrine and the mosque of Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, the prophet Muhammad's companion who was never defeated in a battle throughout the Islamic conquests. It employed this icon in a context which suggests that the regime targeted the religious Islamic symbols; exclusively, the Sunni ones, of course. Al-Jazeera also employed it in a context suggesting that the citizens were the children and grandchildren of this hero. So, this is a significance of the necessity of not submitting to the authority of the regime. That is, they should resemble this leader. They should not give up; either victory or martyrdom.

It was noticed in all the reports that the regime's soldiers spoke the accent of the people of the coast or mountains<sup>311</sup>. This is an implicit indication that the soldiers of the Syrian army are Alawites, a minority army which confronts people most of whom belong to the Sunni majority. The accent alone is not enough. It does not alone point out the barbarism of the Alawite sect. Therefore, the Channel depended on the selectivity of the pictures. The regime's soldiers appeared hitting harshly and saying filthy words to the detainees calling them the names of animals: "Speak! You, dog."<sup>312</sup>, "Come on. Bark!"<sup>313</sup>, "Come on. Bray like a donkey!"<sup>314</sup>. Even when they investigated a detainee, their loud voices and their tone suggested their disrespect of the people. They also suggest the lack of moral codes which control the investigation and maintain the dignity of the detainees. The effect of this sort of videos is tremendous when the detainee is a mosque's Imam, which is a signifier that the symbols of the Sunni sect are disparaged and humiliated.

(26-27)



The security forces' humiliation of the detainees.<sup>315</sup>

311 The accents in Syria differ from a province to another, a city to another and a village to another. Most of the Alawites live on the coast or the mountains. They use the thick and strong accents of these regions.

312 20 June 2011, 27 November 2011. "احكي ولا كلب"

313 27 November 2011. "عوي ولا"

314 27 November 2011. "شهيق مثل الحمار يلا ولا"

315 27 November 2011.

According to Al-Jazeera, the regime destroys the churches and does not respect the religious symbols. However, the channel's mention of the churches was accidental. Its concentration on the Islamic symbols was much more frequent. Pointing out the assault of the different religious symbols is an implicit message which indicates that the regime is the enemy of all religions. It is an extremist secular regime so all the parties should stand steadfastly against it.

#### **4- The Images which Deal with the Regular Military Activity**

There is an additional factor which contributed to exaggerating the image of the regime as a beast. Besides Al-Jazeera's selectivity of the vocabulary and the media personnel's voice tone, the images taken by the mobile phones had an immense role in giving an impression on the gravity of the situation in Syria. Most of these images were absolutely misty and blurred. Vibrating images where the activist moves violently from one shot to the other, quickly and sharply moving the camera angle from left to right or up and down. This helps to create a mental image of unrest, instability, horror and insecurity.

(28)



During suppressing the demonstrations, the security forces seem more like gangs than government forces.<sup>316</sup>

Some images were utterly dark. Sometimes we hear the activist's voice documenting the setting of the video or telling how far the people were horrified by the regime's forces. In fact, the darkness of these images dramatically suggests that the regime's soldiers are similar to a beast waiting for the people. This beast might suddenly appear at any time to devour these civilians. Selecting videos like these by the Channel shows its intention of demonizing the regime and reassuring the blackness of the Syrian scene.

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<sup>316</sup> 07 July 2011.



(29)



An image which is void of a clear content and the news text is about the assaults of the security forces on the people.<sup>317</sup>

The images that cover the activities of the regime's soldiers are diversified. Sometimes they are shown carrying guns and machine-guns, waiting for the movements of the demonstrators or civilians, ready to shoot them. Sometimes they are shown hooded, an implicit significance that they are unofficial military forces (Shabbiha), arresting and murdering people in the streets and torturing the detainees. Moreover, they are shown treading and humiliating the detainees by slapping them and calling them animals' names and other labels which hurt human dignity.

(30)



The security forces run over the demonstrators. The shaky images may increase the effect of the content on the recipient.<sup>318</sup>

Veiled women wearing *hijab* appeared trying to save a detainee from the hands of the security personnel. The videos also included images of soldiers forcibly entering the homes or deployed in an area so as to perform a military action. All these images were taken by the mobile phone cameras. The photographers were opponents who zoomed them in, which made the images more

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317 23 March 2011.

318 20 June 2011.

fearful as the vibration rate was doubled. Other photographers were regime supporters or regular soldiers, which suggests the fact that these soldiers were boasting of what they did against the people.

While the regime was sending tanks and armored vehicles to the governorates and cities of Syria, the civilians used to take photos and videos of them by their mobile phone cameras from their private cars. The communication technology was the most important factor of transmitting the internal events out into the external world. Many channels adopted the videos of the Syrians as the only source which told the world about what was taking place on the Syrian land.

There were a variety of the images of tanks. Sometimes we would see them during firing through the turrets. On other occasions, we would see them running to be redeployed in other places. The Syrians' stealthy photographing of these tanks helped demonize the regime's forces. The videos were so misty and vibrating that the tanks seemed extremely horrible. The audience might feel that the photographer took these images secretly lest he could be discovered and killed.

(31)



Taking a remote picture of a Syrian army's tank with a mobile phone lens.<sup>319</sup>

Images of the regime's helicopters and aircrafts appeared either when they were only flying or when they were bombarding the parts of the cities. Other images were also taken where one can see the rocket falling down then hitting the target and exploding causing enormous smoke. These shots showed how the people prepared their cameras waiting for the rockets and the artillery missiles in order to catch another evidence which showed the Syrian government's crimes against the civilians to the world.

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319 10 August 2011.

(32)



The Syrian army's aircrafts bombard the civilians.<sup>320</sup>

Many of the studied reports started with the sounds of gun and artillery firing. Images suggesting destruction and devastation were attached to these reports. Then the news stories started. This method suggests that the images are talking and that the crimes of the regime can never be denied. It also prepares the audience's mind to accept all the points which the report is going to handle later. This is because the simple audience whose experience lacks the way to verify the source and the origin of the image will certainly believe that the Channel is stating the facts as they really happened. They can hear the bombardment with their own ears and see the devastation with their own eyes.

Many of the videos which deal with the regime's activity do not include images of soldiers, tanks, helicopters or aircrafts. These contents were substituted by something else which is the smoke which comes up after the bombardment. Smoke has become a signifier and a symbol. It denotes the regime's military operations. Seeing smoke is enough to make us understand that the regime's forces are bombarding. Moreover, the impact of smoke increases when it is linked to mosques and minarets.

(33)



The smoke is an indication of the regime's bombardment / Smoke is a substitute of the images of the Syrian army soldiers.<sup>321</sup>

<sup>320</sup> 03 April 2012.

<sup>321</sup> 27 November 2011.

(34)



Linking the smoke resulting from the Syrian army's bombard to the minaret.<sup>322</sup>

The devastation on Al-Jazeera's screen was enormous: destroyed homes, burned cars, smoke coming up everywhere due to bombing. This devastation is frequently connected to the regime's bombing and aggression. That is, Al-Jazeera never referred to the conflict between the government forces and the armed opposition as a reason for this devastation. This helped keep the image of the armed opposition clean; its soldiers never destroy or kill the people. They only accurately target the regime in order not to hurt the civilians.

In many of the studied reports, the time interval between the camera shot and the other was short and fast. This rhythm does not allow the recipient's mind any time to concentrate on a certain point. It rather may create a situation of tension inside the audience that makes them project their feelings and emotions on the events. That is, this tension will motivate them to think that the situation is disastrous in reality.

In many images, the content was not clear. For instance, we might only see dark images and hear the sound of shooting, or watch images of houses or of a road. These images were taken by a shaking mobile phone in the hands of a man who was running. We only hear the gasping of this man or the sound of feet moving fast. These images do not have a clear content but spur the imagination of the recipient who might imagine that the security personnel are chasing the photographer in order to kill him, or that the mobile owner is running so that he could closely take the images of the events, or that the mobile holder is stealthily taking the images which led him not to focus on a clear target.

This selectivity also clarifies how the Channel builds its news up and affects the audience through depending on images which have no direct sense. the Channel is the one which creates sense to these images through the news narration.

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322 14 June 2012.

## 5 – The Regime's Actions Against the Free Army and the Armed Factions

Al-Jazeera did not concentrate on the regime's actions against the armed opposition. Syntactically speaking, it hardly used sentences in which the regime is a 'subject' against an 'object' – the opposition. For example, the forces of the army and the security raided the armed opposition centers or destroyed its positions. Al-Jazeera employed terms such as "battles" and "clashes" to express the regime's fighting with the armed opposition. These terms dwarf the regular army and portrays it as equivalent in power to the opposition army as the word battles does not linguistically mean the presence of one 'subject' but two or more.

## 6 – The Regime's Propaganda

Especially in 2011, Al-Jazeera recalled the pillars of the regime's propaganda. It introduced the factors of the propaganda for many purposes: firstly, proving its credibility, that is, its news contains the attitudes and opinions of the different parties of the conflict. Secondly, directly or indirectly mocking the Syrian government. Thirdly, discrediting the governmental propaganda explicitly or implicitly (hinting), and proving the innocence of the opposition of the charges which the regime makes against it.

Al-Jazeera employed words and statements that aroused doubt in the credibility of the regime and the Syrian media. "Damascus charges what it describes as armed gangs"<sup>323</sup>. Al-Jazeera did not state that Damascus charged armed gangs. The Channel rather used the term "what it describes as" armed gangs. This is a significance that the term "armed gangs" is doubtful as governments usually give names which serve the goals of their propaganda. "The alleged gang", "The alleged terrorists" (7 times) are a hint that these gangs are only a lie created by the regime. "The authorities continue their talk of armed gangs"<sup>324</sup>, "The authority's media continued saying"<sup>325</sup>, "The authorities repeat taking about assumed armed people"<sup>326</sup>, "The authority people repeat their words and tirelessly talk about chasing the armed gangs which terrified the people"<sup>327</sup> that is, without getting tired or bored the regime is disparaging the minds of people. In the Arab culture, the term "tirelessly" is sometimes used to express displeasure and to disprove the speaker.

The most prominent pillars of the regime's propaganda Al-Jazeera recalled were: Armed gang stand behind the events, the gangs are financed by regional and international parties and the armed gangs store the arms and ammunitions inside the mosque. The regime was trying to justify its raiding of the mosques through this propaganda, yet Al-Jazeera assured that the mosques had no weapons and that the demonstrations were hundred per cent peaceful.

323 23 March 2011, 29 March 2011. Synonyms have been repeated 64 times. "اتهم دمشق ما تصفها بعصابات مسلحة"

324 29 March 2011. "تواصل السلطات حديثها عن عصابات مسلحة"

325 11 April 2011. "واصلت وسائل إعلام السلطة قولها"

326 11 April 2011. "تكرر السلطات الحديث عن مسلحين مفترضين"

327 04 July 2011. "يكرر أهل السلطة قولهم المكرر ويتحدثون بلا كلل عن مطاردة العصابات المسلحة التي روعت الأهالي"

"Armed gangs availed the opportunity of the arising disorder and shot the two parties aiming at creating a sectarian strife"<sup>328</sup>. Al-Jazeera's journalists used to talk in a tone suggesting disparaging this propaganda as if they were trying to say: 'What is the purpose of the opposition to create a sectarian strife?'

"It's a great conspiracy where the sectarian strife has been mixed with the reformation demands and the daily needs of people"<sup>329</sup>, "The authority's media continued assuring the story of infiltrated conspirators who work to implement external conspiracies and shoot both the protestors and the authority men"<sup>330</sup>, "The regime's media machine tirelessly goes on reiterating the same repeated account of an external conspiracy and terrorist armed gangs which horrify the citizens and try to abort the reformation process that will make Syria a model of democracy in the region"<sup>331</sup>, Al-Jazeera's journalists tried to prove the Syrian Government's incredibility with a sarcastic style that leads one to feel their disgust of the elements of the government propaganda. This appears through the selectivity of the vocabulary items and the voice tone which are accompanied by images that extremely contradict the propaganda of the Syrian authorities.

"They are not armed gangs as the regime's account states. They are rather soldiers who defected their country's army when it decided to direct its weapons towards the armless citizens."<sup>332</sup> This is an explicit discrediting of the regime propaganda.

The Channel recalled terms that have been used by the official Syrian media: "Tranquility prevails in the country"<sup>333</sup>, "Normal life prevailed all over the governorates"<sup>334</sup>, however, no sooner did Al-Jazeera do that than it followed up with the counter propaganda accompanied by cheers or by the voices of people terrified by the sound of firing. The Channel denied and discredited the withdrawal of the army after it accomplished its tasks as the official Syrian media stated.

A pillar of the regime's propaganda was its performing of reformations on all levels. The Channel was always careful to throw doubt on the government's promises and the alleged reformations. "As for the government's old and renewed account of a political reformation, it remains mere promises looking for a way to be implemented."<sup>335</sup> This is a significance that this government promised to perform reformations years ago but did not implement anything. It is still lying and anesthetizing the people's anger with words rather than deeds. The national dialogue was a suggestion of the regime's in 2011. The government took care to listen to the demands, criticisms

328 29 March 2011. "عصابات مسلحة انتهرت فرصة الفوضى الناشئة لتطلق النار على الطرفين سعياً إلى زرع فتنة طائفية"

329 30 March 2011. "هي مؤامرة كبرى جرى فيها خلط الفتنة مع مطالب الإصلاح و احتياجات الناس اليومية"

330 11 April 2011. "واصلت وسائل إعلام السلطة تأكيد قصة المتدمسين المتأمرين الذين يعملون لتنفيذ مؤامرات خارجية و يطلقون النار على المحتجين و رجال السلطة سواء بسواء"

331 14 October 2011.

"تواصل آلة إعلام السلطة دون كلل أو ملل ترديد الرواية المتكررة عن مؤامرة خارجية و عصابات إرهابية مسلحة ترزع المواطنين و تحاول إجهاض عملية الإصلاح التي ستجعل سورية نموذجاً للديمقراطية في المنطقة"

332 25 November 2011. "ليسوا عصابات مسلحة على ما تذهب إليه رواية النظام بل جنود انشقوا عن جيش بلادهم الوطني منذ قرر توجيه أسلحته نحو المدنيين العزل"

333 02 April 2011. "هدوء يعم البلاد"

334 02 April 2011. "حياة طبيعية كانت تسود المحافظات"

335 03 May 2011. "أما حديث الحكومة القديم المتجدد عن إصلاح سياسي فيبقى مجرد وعود تبحث عن سبيل إلى التنفيذ"

and viewpoints of the people. It promised to perform changes that will meet the people's ambitions, then started performing constitutional and legal amendments during the first months of the crisis in 2011. However, Al-Jazeera devoted itself to abort this dialogue. It assured the necessity of excluding the idea of negotiating the current authority as it is politically and ethically disqualified to lead the country. The Channel extremely disparaged the government's reforms. It assured that the people have no desire whatsoever to dialogue with the murderer. Their only wish is overthrowing the ruling regime. So how will they dialogue with the one who daily raises the volume of his depression? Who will the regime dialogue with if all its opponents are either outside the country or inside the regime's prisons? Can any promised reformation be straightforward side by side with a continuous violation of the simplest human rights in Syria? In order to undermine the credibility of the government's promises, Al-Jazeera mobilized an enormous number of the opponents' viewpoints and attitudes. Al-Jazeera's media staff rarely uncovered their own opinions. This style makes the Channel innocent of any charges of being aligned. Rather, it appears as if it were just conveying the opponents' viewpoints.

In the context of its coverage of the reforms, Al-Jazeera reported declarations and viewpoints of Syrian officials. This reporting gives the impression of its neutralism and objectivity, but through analyzing the context of these declarations, the officials seem naïve and stupid disparaging the minds of the people. For instance, the report presents images of victims, funerals, mass graves and severe bombardment accompanied by screams of terrified people running away from the regime's brutality. Then a Syrian official appears to talk about forming committees for studying the Emergency-Law, the Parties Law, and the Media Law, or about forming a statistics committee for the census of the Kurds in northern Syria. In this way, the Channel does not need to verbally disparage or make fun of the government's promises. This style could have an immense psychological impact on the recipient; the Syrian audience may be filled with hatred towards the government and the officials. The recipient may be filled with wrath and have a feeling of disability. He/she may be charged with a “negative energy” against the regime. This energy may only be discharged by verbal or non-verbal violence. If the channel's media personnel had frankly and directly said that the Syrian officials were liars and hypocrites who were killing the people and not performing any reforms, the recipient might not have been as much angry as when they use the indirect and provoking style. The direct and straightforward style could be considered one of the means of discharging the suppressed energy of the opponent people against the regime. The indirect style, on the other hand, increases pressure and could lead to an “emotional explosion”. However, to ensure the validity of this idea, it is necessary to adopt different methods that enable us to know the recipient's reaction toward the explicit and implicit messages.

There are other examples about the synchronization between officials' declarations and images that contradict the content of those declarations. The presidential adviser assured in many reports that the president Assad issued directions to the security and the public army forces ordering them

not to shoot the citizens. At the same time, we heard the shooting of a gun or a machine gun accompanied by the images of the feet of horrified people running away.

At the time when Al-Jazeera mentioned that the Syrian government issued laws which were compatible with the reformation policy like the abolition of the Emergency-Law, it used to show images of soldiers rampaging the buildings and trying to forcibly enter the homes.

The Channel criticized the mechanism of the official Syrian media, especially during its coverage of explosions which the regime charged terrorists of performing. Al-Jazeera hinted that those explosions were done by the regime. For example, Al-Jazeera reported the Syrian Space Channel's security analysis of the results of an explosion ten minutes after it took place. The result of the report was that extremist terrorists committed this act. Al-Jazeera hinted through its coverage that, on one hand, the Syrian media was lying and that, on the other hand, the regime was the one responsible for that explosion. Otherwise, how could the Syrian Security personnel decide who the doer was within ten minutes? Then Al-Jazeera recalled statements the opposition issued denying its responsibility for the explosions. This indicates that Al-Jazeera seeks the acquittal of the opposition of the charges which the Syrian authorities attribute to it. "This time, the government channel coolly handled the two explosions. It did not hastily announce how they happened whether by mined cars or suicide bombers as it used to do."<sup>336</sup> Through these expressions, Al-Jazeera intends to indicate that the Syrian Space Channel took into consideration Al-Jazeera's previous criticism of its speed in deciding the data of those explosions and the identity of the person who implemented them. "Why does terrorism hit the regions most involved in the revolution?"<sup>337</sup>, this is an implicit message the aim of which is irrevocably discrediting the regime. That is, the opposition can by no means perform explosions in the areas where its supporters and children live.

As for the explosions which hit the security and government centers, Al-Jazeera also threw doubt on the regime's propaganda which charged the terrorists of committing them. The Channel employed hinting expressions: "The alleged terrorist guerilla came uncovering itself in the heart of Damascus, a fortified castle of the regime's."<sup>338</sup> This is an implicit message; how could these terrorist groups enter strongly guarded security areas known for being impossible to be assaulted? "Then, Al-Qaeda Organization is moving freely across the borders targeting the Syrian security forts leading the conspiracy against Al-Assad's regime in agreement with the United States which is chasing it."<sup>339</sup> This is an explicit direct sarcasm of the regime's propaganda concerning Al-Qaeda's targeting of government centers.

Al-Jazeera indicated that the insecurity entirely served the regime. It was able to justify continuing the bombardment and the military operations against the civilians under the pretext that it was fighting the armed terrorists who were assaulting the people and the public property. "The

336 10 February 2012. "بتروي تعاملت القناة الحكومية هذه المرة مع التجنيزين إذ لم تسارع إلى الإعلان عن كيفية حدوثهما سواء بسيارات مفخخة أو عبر انتحاريين كما فعلت سابقاً."

337 06 January 2012. "لماذا يضرب الإرهاب أكثر المناطق انخراطاً بالثورة؟"

338 23 December 2011. "جاءت العصاة الإرهابية المزعومة كاشفة عن نفسها في قلب دمشق في حصن حصين من حصون النظام."

339 23 December 2011. "تنظيم القاعدة يصول و يجول إذن على الحدود و يضرب قلاع الأمن السورية، يقود المؤامرة على نظام الأسد في توافق مع الولايات المتحدة التي تلاحقه."



disc of targeting Syria due to its resistant and reluctant stance is being replayed, as if the Syrian people, by attaining their freedom and having the opportunity of choosing their leadership democratically, would elect those who would make them surrender to their enemies who occupy their land."<sup>340</sup> This is a significance suggesting the discontent of Al-Jazeera with the regime's propaganda's repetition of the regime's role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It also suggests that Al-Jazeera tried to portray the opposition as a national one whose foremost enemy is Israel, and that it will not yield or negotiate with the Israeli aggression which occupies its land. The opposition will rather fight it. One of the most eminent pillars of the regime's propaganda on Al-Jazeera's screen was the role of the Muslim Brothers Party and the other fundamentalist organizations in ravaging the country and shaking its security and stability.

"The infiltrated people", "Those who try to destabilize Syria", "Those who are involved in the famous universal conspiracy."<sup>341</sup> (64 times) All these phrases, used by pro-regime media, were stated on Al-Jazeera in an ironic discrediting tone.

The Syrian media always criticized the pro-opposition media describing them as the stations of calumny, incitement and fabrication which direct continuous propaganda in order to undermine the stability of Syria and the security of its citizens. Al-Jazeera recalled these media attitudes and presented them in a sarcastic way. When the Syrian Space Channel was denying the news about discovering a mass grave and charging the incitement stations of lying, Al-Jazeera was confidently showing the charges directed to it by the Syrian Space Channel accompanied by images of a mass grave and decayed bodies.

During covering the massacres which were a result of the chemical weapon, many official Syrian statements denying this news were declared. Al-Jazeera recalled these televised statements, the statement of the General Leadership of the Army and the Armed Forces: "The Leadership assures that these allegations are null in every detail. They are totally invalid and fall under the dirty media war led by some countries."<sup>342</sup> Al-Jazeera attached images of chemical victims to this statement. The Channel did not verbally discredit the regime's propaganda but presented images which were utterly contradictory to the statement.

The Syrian government television tried to prove that the people come out of the mosques cheering to the life of the president and swear at the armed gangs. Al-Jazeera recalled this type of news coverage and commented on it. For instance, "Soldiers, a photographer and Shabbiha, and everything is ready in front of the Damascene Al-Qaboon Mosque."<sup>343</sup> This is an implicit message which means that the Syrian security personnel have prepared everything. They have brought the photographers and the soldiers with their guns and lined in front of the mosque. So, when the worshippers came out, they were afraid and compulsorily started cheering to Al-Assad.

"تكرر أسطوانته استهداف سوريا بسبب موقفها المقاوم و الممانع، لكن الشعب السوري لو نال حريته و أتيح له اختيار قيادته ديمقراطياً سينتخب من يذهبون به إلى الاستسلام أمام أعدائه و محتلي أرضه". 27 May 2011. <sup>340</sup>

"المتدسون"، "الساعون إلى ضرب استقرار سوريا"، "المنخرطون في المؤامرة الكونية الشهيرة" <sup>341</sup>

"القيادة تؤكد أن هذه الإدعاءات باطلة جملة و تفصيلا و عارية تماما عن الصحة و تندرج في إطار الحرب الإعلامية القذرة التي تقودها بعض الدول". 21 August 2013. <sup>342</sup>

"عسكر و مصور و شبيح، كل شيء جاهز أمام مسجد القابون الدمشقي". 31 December 2011. <sup>343</sup>

While the pro-regime channels were promoting the phrase: 'It's over', an indication that the crisis has finished, Al-Jazeera was promoting the anger of the Syrian street with this phrase<sup>344</sup>. The Channel was disparaging the pro-regime media as well as the officials who are unable to see the truth. The crisis, according to Al-Jazeera, has not ended and will not end before Al-Assad has stepped down and before the regime has been thrown down.

Al-Jazeera discredited the regime's propaganda which stated that 'the people asked the army to interfere in their regions in order to protect them from the armed terrorist groups', and that 'the army has purified the cities from the armed gangs and regained security and tranquility.' Al-Jazeera denied the credibility of the governmental information through asking why haven't the refugees come back to these regions so long as they have become secure as the regime states?

As usual, the pro-regime channels used to charge the armed terrorists, the lawbreakers, the extremists of committing the explosions in Syria. Al-Jazeera used to convey the propagandas of both conflicting parties in Syria every time an explosion takes place. It wanted to prove its credibility. At the same time, the Channel tried to maintain the mental image that the regime was behind these explosions in order to charge the opposition. Then, Al-Jazeera adopted two methods to realize this aim: the media personnel used a tone which suggested that the regime was responsible for all the criminal scenes in Syria, or they presented information about the explosion site, the surrounding areas, the security intensification, preventing all people from entering except on basis of a security permission, and the control cameras on all sides of the site etc. The aim of this information is indirectly assuring that the regime, not the opposition, was the doer. Al-Jazeera repeatedly indicated that the explosions took place before important events such as international conferences, the Arab committees entering into Syria, or discussing the UN Resolutions and so on. This is a significance that the regime devises these events in order to urge the Arab and international officials to make decisions which serve its interests.

Al-Jazeera so much targeted the regime that it sometimes took no notice of the human being as it should do when it came to covering the explosions. When an explosion took place, the Channel did not concentrate on the human situation such as the dead or the injured. It rather concentrated more on proving the responsibility of the regime for the explosion. The victims seemed during the explosions as if they were of no interest. This gives the impression that the Channel trading in the identity of the victims. What is meant here is that when the victims were opponent civilians who were killed as a result of the regime's bombing, Al-Jazeera would greatly show them. However, the explosion victims were unidentified people who do not have a completely clear political identity; they could be pro or ant-regime, or maybe neutral. In this case, the Channel did not give priority to talking about the victims. It rather wholly tried to discredit the regime's propaganda.

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344 27 May 2011, 14 October 2011.

In one of the videos<sup>345</sup> which covered an explosion, Al-Jazeera reported scenes from a pro-regime channel. These scenes showed a veiled woman speaking loudly. She was screaming out of fear and agony: "So, this is their freedom, that's what their freedom is like."<sup>346</sup> These phrases indicate that the people are against the opposition. They do not support its slogans about freedom; the opposition performs explosions and murders innocent people. On the face of it, the recipient may wonder: Does Al-Jazeera want to say that the pro-regime people are right to stand against the opposition and to reject its behavior? Has Al-Jazeera started to feel that the armed people are the ones who stand behind these crimes? But no; Al-Jazeera actually showed these scenes to reassure that the regime commits the crimes to make the people afraid, pressured and confused. The regime is leading the people to choose between security or freedom. That is, the regime led them to believe that there are armed gangs which want to murder them. Therefore, the citizen has no choice but to agree to their protection by the government forces and to stop supporting the revolutionary movement.

"And as for its<sup>347</sup> lens, it wandered after a few minutes in the site of the two explosions to show the work of the bulldozers and vehicles removing the remnants while the dead bodies were scattered everywhere. The barriers and obstacles are removed away from the crime scene to give way to the government correspondent who moves around the victims' body parts picking some of them up."<sup>348</sup> The Syrian media looks in this comment like the spoiled child who the regime allows to cover events like these while other media are prevented from doing so. This exclusivity and limiting of media coverage to the Syrian media suggests that the regime is being targeted by the armed groups. Therefore, Al-Jazeera has spotlighted the mechanism of the Syrian media and disparaged it in order to discredit the government and its propaganda.

Al-Jazeera employed a variety of methods to discredit the regime's propaganda. Firstly, it employed a sarcastic or rejecting voice tone. For example, the Channel resorted to this method when it used to report the propaganda which assured that there were armed terrorists who terrified the people and removed their property. Secondly, ordering the propagandas inside the news account; that is, Al-Jazeera used to mention the regime's propaganda first then crushes it with the opposition's one which was presented in a voice tone that suggests the credibility of the latter. Thirdly, the images talk. For instance, the Channel used to present a video where the Syrian officials deny that a massacre had happened. At the same time, it showed images of a large number of victims. This method is very impressive since the refusal of the regime's propaganda is not verbal but through images. The image says to the regime: "You are a liar."

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345 30 April 2012.

346 "هي حريتن، هي هي الحرية"

347 Here the Syrian Space Channel is meant.

348 10 February 2012.

"أما عدستها فجالت بعد دقائق قليلة في موقع التفجيرين لتظهر عمل الجرافات و الآليات لإزالة الركام، بينما الجثث متطايرة منتشرة في المكان. تُزال الحواجز و العوائق من مسرح الجريمة أمام المراسل الحكومي منتقلا بين أشلاء القتلة و منتشلا بعضيها".

There are other elements of the regime's propaganda: the military end game, the regime's army is advancing after killing some of the terrorists, Syria's chemical weapon was a response to Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. It is not directed towards the interior use, and Syria knows that the chemical weapon is going to be a pretext for external interference as what happened in Iraq.

"The military end game that Al-Assad is trying to realize is one which he has been unable to end till now. That's what the facts of the field and the blood-soaked revolution's diary assure."<sup>349</sup> The Channel disparages the regime's propaganda related to the military activity which is going to resolve the conflict in favor of the Syrian army. Al-Jazeera tried to create a situation of equilibrium between two images. The first one portrays the regime as a brutal one, armed with the heaviest weapons, bombarding every single patch of the Syrian land. The second shows the regime's inability to realize a military victory. This equilibrium aims to mobilize the Syrian, Arab and international public opinion against the regime. At the same time, it helps to boost the morale of the armed opposition and the opponent civilians as well.

## 7- The Regime's Weapons as They Appeared on Al-Jazeera Channel

Taking into consideration that the Channel never reported the armed opposition's losses, nor the regime's victories in confronting this opposition, it is necessary to notice that mentioning the weapons the regime's forces use suggests that they are absolutely using them against the unarmed, peaceful, civilian people, not against the armed gangs.

According to Al-Jazeera, the regime did not save any means to use, starting with tear gases, boiling water and acid in order to deter the demonstrators, and ending with the chemical weapon. "The barrel bombs remain one of a huge arsenal the Syrian regime continued using to bombard the cities and towns."<sup>350</sup>, "The only difference between a weapon and another is only the rate of devastation and the number of victims and homeless."<sup>351</sup>

The Channel adopted various methods of showing the weapon types the regime uses. The first one is generalization. For example, "The regime's war machine"<sup>352</sup>, "The regime is using all kinds of weapons"<sup>353</sup> are phrases which the Channel used to assure that the Syrian army is killing the people with all methods.

The second method is the partial identification. For instance, "The regime's bombs" (3 times), "The regime's rockets" (16 times), the weapon is a bomb or a rocket but it is partial identification. The Channel does not exactly identify which type of bombs or rockets they are. "Military vehicles"

<sup>349</sup> 18 February 2012. "الحسم العسكري الذي يسعى الأسد لإنجازه حسم عاجز عن الحسم حتى الساعة، و ذلك ما تؤكده وقائع الميدان و يوميات الثورة المضرجة بالدماء"

<sup>350</sup> 16 December 2013. "تبقى البراميل واحدة من ترسانة ضخمة دأب النظام السوري على استخدامها بقصف المدن و البلدات."

<sup>351</sup> 16 December 2013. "لا يختلف سلاح عن آخر إلا من حيث نسبة الدمار و عدد الضحايا و المشردين."

<sup>352</sup> 18 February 2012. "آلة النظام الحربية"

<sup>353</sup> 11 December 2011, 22 July 2013. "النظام يستخدم كافة أنواع الأسلحة"

(9 Times) is a land weapon, a partial identification. "The security bullets" (12 times) is also a partial identification. the Channel does not tell if it is guns, machine guns, or pistols bullets.

The third method is macro identification of the type and name of the weapon like; mortars<sup>354</sup>, MIG-21 aircrafts (4 times).

The fourth method is not mentioning weapons at all. This method unleashes the imagination of the recipient. For example, "The regime's forces have started targeting a town since morning"<sup>355</sup>.

In modern wars, all types of essential weapons - on land, at sea and in air – function as an integrated system that confronts the enemy. In the battles in Syria, land and air forces were employed more than the naval ones. This is because most or the majority of the battlefields lie in the interior away from the coast<sup>356</sup>. Al-Jazeera mentioned that the Navy are participating in the war against the armless Syrian people. This suggests that the Syrian people are between the jaws of the carnivorous regime. The armed forces are shooting and bombing the civilians from land, air and sea. So, this is a horrible situation which requires an Arab and international movement to save this victimized people. Spotlighting the Navy is an additional signifier which proves that the Syrian coast has entered the line of events and the revolution. So, it forms a great danger on the safety of the ruling regime as a large part of the Alawite sect lives in the villages and towns of the Syrian coast.

The regime's use of the Navy is a significance of its great fear of the popular movement in the coastal regions. This movement may overthrow it and even tragically claim the lives of the civilian pro-regime Alawites in addition to the lives of the regime's soldiers.

'The Barrel Bombs' (3 times) is a signifier of large indiscriminate destruction because they are considered as an undirected weapon; "The death barrels are cheap, severely destructive, indiscriminately directed and harvest lives in tens."<sup>357</sup>

'The Fighter Jets'<sup>358</sup> is a term which suggests that the regime is using the most modern lethal weapons – the Air Force – against the civilians. Most of the aircrafts used in the Syrian battles are fighter jets like MIG 21 and MIG 23.

'The Rocket Launchers' (6 times) are a weapon that ensures a high firing density which helps the Land Forces during their assaulting of the enemy's areas. Al-Jazeera largely pointed out this type of weapons. Its aim was overemphasizing the image of the brutal regime, the destructive lethal incendiary beast.

'The Cluster Bombs' (4 times) are employed to attack a variety of targets such as armored vehicle and individuals. They can also start fires.

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354 08 May 2012, 30 May 2012.

355 25 December 2012. "بدأت قوات النظام منذ الصباح استهداف بلدة"

356 The Syrian coast lies in the north-west of Syria. It includes the governorate of Tartous in the south and the governorate of Latakia in the north.

357 16 December 2013. "براميل الموت رخيصة الكلفة شديدة التدمير عشوائية الهدف و تحصد الأرواح بالعشرات"

358 02 October 2012, 08 October 2012.

'The Vacuum Bombs'<sup>359</sup> are a weapon employed for the underground targets such as shelters, storehouses, and tunnels as the classical weapons are unable to penetrate these places. It is notable here to remind that Al-Jazeera's news accounts did not mention that the regime used these weapons against the armed opposition. That is why it seemed to be using them against the armless people.

'The phosphorus Bombs'<sup>360</sup> are a weapon that burns the human body so that only the bones remain. Inhaling this weapon for a short or a long time has destructive effects on the human health. Highlighting this weapon is a signifier that the regime uses internationally prohibited weapons. It is also a significance that life in Syria has become nearly impossible as bombs burn all human or non-human lives.

'Internationally prohibited chemical weapons'<sup>361</sup> is a significance that the regime wants to entirely wipe out the people as the chemical weapons are a type of mass destruction weapons that wipe out all living things and pollute the natural environment.

'Surface-to-surface missiles' (4 times) which are a devastating weapon that enables the military forces to avoid direct confrontation with the enemy. This indicates the regime's fear and its inability to face the opposition armed gangs, which in turn is a significance of the regime's brutality in murdering the people.

## 8 - Regional Signifiers

Al-Jazeera used different methods in presenting the names of the regions where the regime performed its military activities. First, many times it listed the names of a large number of regions which may have reached twenty from all over Syria in a fast rhythm which suggested that the regime's campaigns were like the torrent which carried away everything in its course; that Syria was burning with the fires of bombardment; and that the prisons everywhere in the country were crowded. This method makes all the governorates, towns, villages and quarters of the country important regional icons. Second, the Channel adopted the method of generalization and not mentioning the names of any region. For example, "One city after the other under the firing of the regime's army"<sup>362</sup>, "Military campaigns from the east to the north and center of Syria"<sup>363</sup>. Such phrases set the imagination of the recipient free. This imagination is affected by the individual experience, the political, social and religious affiliation. So, if the recipient were an extremist anti-regime person, he/she would imagine that all the regions of Syria are exposed to assaults by the government forces. However, if the recipient were pro-regime, he/she might think that the regular military forces are fighting the terrorists in many regions of Syria. What is meant here is that the

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359 14 January 2013.

360 14 January 2013.

361 19 March 2013, 05 August 2013.

362 14 August 2011. "مدينة تلّو أخرى تحت نيران الجيش السوري"

363 18 September 2012. "العمليات العسكرية من شرق سوريا إلى شمالها إلى وسط البلاد"

affiliation of the recipient mentally re-portrays the events regardless of the channel's intention and aim of using certain expressions.

The third method was handling the events in few regions. The fourth method which Al-Jazeera adopted in presenting the number of regions was concentrating on one region and highlighting it as a symbol of challenging the blood-stained policy of the regime: Homs, "The revolution's capital"<sup>364</sup>, "Homs which discovered the meaning of patience in facing the oppressing governor."<sup>365</sup> According to the opposition, Homs was nominated as the revolution's capital because it challenged the weapons of the Syrian army and the security peacefully and for a long time, and because the regime's forces practiced the ugliest types of bombardment and repression on it.

Hama, "In the Syrian conscience it has been connected to what is called the Century's Massacre."<sup>366 367</sup> This is an implicit message which means that the city of Hama – most of its inhabitants belong to the Sunni sect - suffered from the regime's crimes years ago, and now it is again suffering from its bombardment and murder. The symbolism of this region is very important since it is able to stir up the feelings of the Sunni sect against the regular forces as well as all its supporters in the society.

Deir-Ezzour, according to Al-Jazeera, the specialty of Deir-Ezzour makes things more complicated. This is a hint to the situation of the clans and their attitude which is an implicit message through which the Channel wanted to present the clans as opponents of the regime contrary to the regime's propaganda that strongly show the loyalty of the clans and their sheikhs to the regime. Al-Jazeera indicated that governorates like Deir-Ezzour and Daraa form what is called the human store of the recruited soldiers. the Channel wanted to state indirectly that the regime's bombardment of these regions is a significance of its weakness and losing control on things as most of the soldiers of the Syrian army defectors and joined the armed opposition. It should be, mentioned here that the majority of the inhabitants of these regions are Sunnis. This is a hint that the soldiers who belong to the Sunni sect are dissenting to fight against the regular army forces (Alawites).

The coastal city of Latakia, the importance of this region arises from its being in the vicinity of the pro-regime Alawite villages. This icon is also a significance that the Alawite regime murders only the Sunnis. It bombards the Sunni sect, the inhabitants of the city, while the Alawites enjoy security and peace in the surrounding villages.

Al-Raml Quarter in Latakia, this quarter is inhabited by Palestinian refugees. Al-Jazeera reported that it was targeted by warships and naval vessels. This is a significance that the Palestinians are opponents of the regime's policy and that the regime is killing them with very

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364 11 December 2011, 12 June 2012. "عاصمة الثورة"

365 11 December 2011. "حمص التي اكتشفت معنى الصبر في مواجهة الحاكم الظالم"

366 05 August 2011. "ارتبطت بالوجدان السوري بما يُعرف بمجزرة القرن"

367 Al-Jazeera many times hinted to the results of the regime's military campaign in 1982 which is called by the regime opponents: 'the massacre of Hama.'

heavy weapons. This is a message which tries to rebut the government propaganda which presents Palestinians as supporters of the Syrian policy.

According to the channel, many quarters have become symbols of suffering. Many quarters have emerged as symbols of enduring the regime's criminality such as Bab-Sbaa and Baba-Amr in Homs.

Daraa, it is one of the southern Syrian governorates. Al-Jazeera highlighted it as an uncontrollable governorate despite the violent military campaigns against it.

Damascus Suburb, the Channel repeatedly highlighted this governorate. It surrounds Damascus and has a great effect on the regime. Highlighting the military activity in Damascus Suburb is considered an implicit message which suggests that the regime's army is very afraid of the increase of the opposition's power. Therefore, it condenses its campaigns on this governorate.

Damascus, Al-Jazeera assured that the capital is not far from what is going on in Syria and that the assault and detainment campaigns are still recorded in many quarters. These are messages which aim to refute the regime's propaganda about tranquility and security which prevail in the capital and that the Damascene people support the regime. Al-Jazeera concentrated on showing the military actions against the Imams of the mosques in Damascus as the city is a religious capital of the Sunni Muslims as well.

"The cities are exhausted by continuous bombardment."<sup>368</sup> The Channel assimilated the cities and governorates to women who were tired and exhausted by the regime's assaults<sup>369</sup>.

## 9 – The Channel's Criticism of the Regime

It was proved that Al-Jazeera criticized sometimes directly (explicit method), other times indirectly (implicit method). The most prominent criticisms which were directed to the Syrian government were as follows:

The regime does not keep all the promises it makes to many international parties. This indicates the incredibility of the Syrian authorities towards the international society. "The authorities insist on the security policy as a single option in handling the crisis"<sup>370</sup> is a criticism that aims at assuring the bankruptcy of the government. It is poor since it does not have any solutions and killing is its only method. "The regime is not ready to any serious procedure to resolve the crisis"<sup>371</sup> is a significance of the carelessness of the regime towards the situation and suffering of the people. "There are no exceptions in the policy of repressing the demonstrators by the security forces"<sup>372</sup> that is nobody is safe from the aggressiveness of the security forces which kill the kids, the women, the elders, the sick and so on. "The soldiers perform campaigns against those whose loyalty to the

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368 31 October 2013. "المدن أنثىها القصف المتواصل"

369 Cities and governorates are feminine words in Arabic language.

370 25 October 2011. "السلطات تصرّ على السياسة الأمنية كخيار وحيد لمعالجة الأزمة"

371 29 October 2011. "النظام غير مستعد لأي إجراء جدي لإنهاء الأزمة"

372 07 November 2011. "لا يوجد استثناءات في سياسة قمع أجهزة الأمن للمتظاهرين"



regime is doubtful"<sup>373</sup> is a criticism which shows a severe and extremely tough dictatorship whose forces spread everywhere detaining and murdering everyone who does not support its policy.

Al-Jazeera criticized the Syrian army, stating that it deviated away from its essential task which is protecting the people to the protection of the regime. "The dogma of the Syrian army has changed so greatly that the demonstrators have become the first enemy of the assumed home guards. The tank which had mistaken its Israeli enemy that has been occupying the Golan Heights<sup>374</sup> for over 40 years found in the flesh of the Syrians a compensation for that of the enemies and started killing unrestrainedly."<sup>375</sup> This is a criticism that discredits the regime's propaganda which shows that the Syrian army is resistant and anti-Israel and that it is the only Arab army which preserves the dignity of the Arab nation a large number of whose rulers has yielded to the Zionist will. Al-Jazeera tried to state that the regime's tanks are killing the people but leave the occupier in the Syrian Golan Heights for more than 40 years. The Channel likened the tank to a hungry beast which cannot eat the Israeli enemy. Therefore, it looked for a substitute to silence its hunger and the Syrian flesh was that substitute.

In this context, Al-Jazeera adopted videos uploaded on the internet where some citizens criticize the coming of a large number of tanks to the governorate of Daraa, which lies on the borders with the Golan Heights. A Syrian said: "This army is fighting its people instead of fighting Israel."<sup>376</sup> Recalling this may have a great effect on the recipient. First of all, because of the Syrian accent, when the Syrians hear the discourse of a Syrian talking in their accent criticizing the army, they might be more affected than when they hear Al-Jazeera's comments in classical Arabic on the same subject. Secondly, discrediting the regime's propaganda by a Syrian layman about opposing Israel means that the people are aware of its lies and that the people's fear, obedience and subjugation have gone away forever.

Al-Jazeera criticized and disparaged the Syrian army by giving it positive attributes such as the national army and the home guards: "Citizens are killed by their national army"<sup>377</sup>, "The home guards destroyed the houses of the citizens."<sup>378</sup> These attributes are paradoxes; it is supposed that the army should protect the people but here it is killing and destroying. "As the Golan Heights will remain in the heart of Syria, one third of the Syrian army has gathered in Daraa."<sup>379</sup> This is the method of vilifying through praise. Verbally these attributes are considered positive of the Syrian army, but this praise is severe defaming. What is meant here is that the regime left the Golan

373 18 November 2011. "الجنود يقومون بعمليات ضد من يشكون بولائه للنظام."

374 Sometimes called 'the Syrian Hill'. It is located in the south-west of Syria. Israel controls 2/3 of its area after occupying it in 1967.

375 27 September 2011.

"أصاب تحول كبير عقيدة الجيش السوري حتى بات معه المتظاهرون العدو الأول لحمة الديار المقترضين. و أن الدبابة التي أخطأت عدوها الإسرائيلي الجاثم في الجولان منذ أكثر من 40 سنة وجدت في لحم السوريين تعويضا عن لحم الأعداء فقتلت وأسرفت في القتل."

376 27 April 2011. "هذه الجيش بدل ما يحارب إسرائيل عم يحارب شعبه!"

377 13 June 2011. "مواطنون قتلوا على يد جيشهم الوطني."

378 07 November 2011, 25 November 2011, 11 December 2011. "حماة الديار دمروا بيوت المواطنين."

379 03 April 2013. "بما أن الجولان سيبقى قلب سوريا فإن ثلث الجيش السوري تجمع في محافظة درعا."

Heights occupied for many years and remained motionless without trying to free it but when the people rebelled, a large number of the army headed to defeat and crush the civilian citizens.

In the context of inciting the soldiers of the Syrian army to dissent and join the armed factions, Al-Jazeera recalled an important historical icon, Youssef Al-Azmah, the Damascene Minister of Defense, who fought the army of the French colonization until he was "martyred" in 1920 AD<sup>380</sup>. The Channel reminded the soldiers of the Syrian army that Youssef Al-Azmah was one of the founders of this army whose main task is defending the homeland. This is a hint that the army, because of defending Al-Assad, has lost its most important pillars and changed into militias fighting for a criminal. The army has changed into criminal, usurper and robber. Therefore, the soldiers should retrieve their military ethics through dissent and fighting for the opponent popular movement.

The regime called some of its military operations 'The military game end'. The pro-regime channels did not stop glorifying this military activity. Al-Jazeera counter-reacted aiming at derogating this action of the regime's. "The military game end which caused the death of thousands and the Syrian people are still daily harvesting its blood-stained effects"<sup>381</sup> is a message which means that the enemy of the army are the innocent armless people, not the armed gangs.

The Channel highlighted the cost of the war, the amount of money the regime spends on murdering its people. Billions of dollars are being spent on the soldiers, the bullets, the bombs, the barrel bombs, the fuel and so on. Al-Jazeera indicated that this money came from the pockets of the Syrian people then came back to them in a different way. That is, the regime is using the state's funds to destroy those who give that money to the state. The people grant their money to be killed with it.

Al-Jazeera criticized the Syrian army personnel's sarcasm of the opponents' dead bodies: "And if the schadenfreude of death reaches a horrific degree."<sup>382</sup> That is, the filthiness of the soldiers' behaviors towards the bodies is indescribable. Then Al-Jazeera criticized the Syrian media's denial of these crimes: "Maybe these crimes took place in India or any other country or religion where the provisions require an end of the dead other than burying them."<sup>383</sup> This is an indication that the regime's soldiers are burning the bodies, mutilating them and chopping them into pieces. The Indians burn the bodies of their dead and other cultures practice different rituals during burying the dead. Through these statements, Al-Jazeera disparaged the Syrian media which always denied the credibility of these videos. The Channel tried to state: 'these videos did not come to us from other countries like India. These are Syrian soldiers who do not respect the dead.' In one of these videos<sup>384</sup>, a group of Syrian soldiers talk to each other and photograph the opponents' bodies. One

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380 27 May 2011.

381 10 May 2012. "الحسم العسكري الذي أودى بحياة الآلاف و مازال الشعب السوري يحصد يوميا آثاره الدموية"

382 "و إذا تَبَلَّغ الشَّمَاتة بالموت حد مريعاً"

383 03 April 2012. "لعل هذه الجرائم وقعت في الهند أو في أي من البلاد و الديانات التي تقضي خاتمة للموتى غير دفنهم"

384 03 April 2012.

of the soldiers says: "Honoring the dead is burning them."<sup>385</sup> This is a significance of the immorality of the regime's soldiers on one hand and can be considered as an explicit sarcasm of the Islamic category: 'Honoring the dead is burying them'.

Al-Jazeera also criticized the declarations of the Syrian government figures. For example,<sup>386</sup> Walid Al-Muallem, the Minister of Foreign Affairs declared that the tanks did not go to Hama; they were going to Idlib via Hama. Al-Jazeera's media personnel commented on this declaration in an ironical tone saying: "As if Idlib were not Syrian and what may happen in it may not consequently happen in Hama."<sup>387</sup>

The criticisms which were directed to the regime's policy were full of sentimental appeals in favor of the civilians. "The bread loaf has become one of the regime's methods of hurting the Syrians especially in the regions which are considered revolution incubators. So, as winter is approaching, starving might be more painful for the civilians."<sup>388</sup> The main target of this comment is criticizing the actions of the regime's forces, while the difficulties which the citizens suffer from are considered a secondary aim or element of the comment. The task of this secondary element is magnifying the negative image of the regime. "Some people in Syria suggest their own equation: water for loyalty."<sup>389</sup> This was a comment on a video which showed the Syrian army's soldiers trying to humiliate some detainees who want to get some water. The regime's soldiers required the detainees to cheer for Al-Assad or glorify his personality or they will not get water. Al-Jazeera wanted to tell the world: 'Look! Al-Assad imposes himself on the people; either they glorify him or they will die of hunger and thirst.

"The Presidential Palace, Mount Qassioun and Abaseen Square<sup>390</sup> have become symbols of death in the eyes of many Syrians who wait for even a miracle that might change the conditions of their country and save them from what they suffer from."<sup>391</sup> The main target of this comment is criticizing the Syrian forces. the Channel used the method of the sentimental appeal in favor of the people in order to support this target.

Al-Jazeera criticized the regime's propaganda that there was a universal conspiracy which targeted the strength and sovereignty of Syria. The Channel ridiculed the idea that what was going on in Syria was a universal war. So, it many times explicitly or implicitly assured that what was going on on the Syrian land was a popular revolution the aim of which was disposing of the dictatorship of the ruling regime.

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<sup>385</sup> "إكرام الميت حرقه"

The original Islamic statement is: 'Honoring the dead is burying them.' That is, it is the duty of people to bury the dead as quickly as possible, which is a sign of respect of the dead body.

<sup>386</sup> 07 July 2011.

<sup>387</sup> "كان إدلب ليست سورية و ما يصح فيها تاليا لا يصح في حماد"

<sup>388</sup> 31 October 2012. "بات رغيغ الخبز إحدى أساليب النظام في النيل من السوريين لا سيما في المناطق التي تعد حاضنة للثورة، و حيث أن موسم الشتاء على الأبواب فربما يكون التجويع أكثر إيلاما للمدنيين."

<sup>389</sup> 20 June 2011. "يقترح البعض في سوريا معادلتهم الخاصة: الماء مقابل الولاء."

<sup>390</sup> Areas in which the regime is based. They are located in the capital, Damascus.

<sup>391</sup> 21 September 2013. "القصر الجمهوري و جبل قاسيون و ساحة العباسيين أصبحت رمزا للموت في نظر كثير من السوريين الذين ينتظرون و لو معجزة تُغيّر حال بلدهم و تخلصهم مما هم فيه."

Al-Jazeera tried to propitiate the Arab and international opinion in favor of the Syrian civilians who were suffering from the regime's repression. It used to conclude a lot of reports with comments which indicated that the Syrian people were directing a message to the human conscience to pay attention to its cause.

## 10 – The Regime's Weakness

In its comments on the news, Al-Jazeera employed phrases which hinted to the regime's weakness and fear. These comments highlight the subjectivity of the channel. "Seeking challenge and the safety of the current regime, Damascus sent an official delegation to listen to the demands of the angry people of the city which is 120 km away from the capital."<sup>392</sup> Al-Jazeera transmitted such statements when the government was sending delegations to talk directly to the people in the governorates of Daraa and Damascus Suburb. The Channel wanted to disparage these activities and to throw doubt on their credibility as the regime is afraid of stepping down and that is why it started to show good conduct towards the citizens. Al-Jazeera concentrated on mentioning the distances between the cities and the capital. For example, 'in the city which is 120 km or 50 km away from the capital', which is a significance of the close distance between the tension and popular movement centers and the regime's security and military ones. So, the regime's positive initiatives are only a result of its fear of being uprooted by the winds of the revolution.

Al-Jazeera drew the attention to the role of the media in obliging the Syrian leadership to listen to the popular demands. "Under the media buzz of the protests, the Syrian leadership moved and declared raising the salaries and pointed out that a decision has been made to end the emergency situation and that laws to decree political and media freedoms are being discussed."<sup>393</sup> This is an implicit indication to the importance of the media's role. The modern communication methods have dwarfed the role of the censorship which the regime imposes on media in Syria. It can't control the news any longer. The people are transmitting images taken by the mobile phone cameras and most of the television channels, especially Al-Jazeera, are repeatedly showing them day and night.

According to Al-Jazeera, "the regime is moving strongly and racing with time in its attack on many cities after it felt that they began to get out of control."<sup>394</sup> This idea can make the anti-regime Syrian recipient feel strong and unafraid because the Channel portrays the military action as a reaction emerging from the fear of falling down. That is, the people are very strong and will achieve victory and that is why the army is performing dense operations. 'The regime is racing with time in its attack.' That is, it is trying to impose its control on the regions before the protests

"من أجل التحدي و سلامة النظام الحالي سمعت دمشق إلى إيفاد وفد رسمي للاستماع إلى مطالب الغاضبين في المدينة التي تبعد 120 كم عن العاصمة". 392 23 March 2011.

393 30 March 2011.

"في ظل الصخب الإعلامي للاحتجاجات، تحركت القيادة السورية و أعلنت عن زيادات في الرواتب و أشارت إلى أن قرارا اتخذ برفع حالة الطوارئ و إلى بحث قوانين لإقرار المزيد من الحريات السياسية و الإعلامية". 394 05 August 2011. "النظام يتحرك بقوة و يسابق الوقت في هجمته على مدن عديدة، بعدما شعر أنها بدأت تخرج عن سلطته "

get wider in them. At the same time, the Channel showed the Syrian people careless of the severity of repression. They continue gathering for protests which have become a daily routine. "The military operations have not been able to restrain the freedom-seeking demonstrators yet."<sup>395</sup>, "For months the authorities have been vainly trying to extinguish the freedom revolution."<sup>396</sup> These statements are loaded with disparaging the efforts of the regime's forces which are trying to extinguish the fire – i.e. the revolution – in vain and with no result. "It seems that the security forces have failed in putting an end to the demonstrations."<sup>397</sup>, "The military game end has failed to tame the revolting cities."<sup>398</sup> This is a metaphor where the revolution is like a wild unbridled horse which the regime cannot calm and control in order to be able to eventually ride it; that is to make use of it and put it at its service.

According to Al-Jazeera, the regime is afraid of more defections from the army. It is afraid of the fact that the rebel movement might get wider inside the Syrian army. Al-Jazeera concentrated on the regime's fear of defections. In its reports, it presented recordings publicized on the internet showing defecting soldiers and officers who assured their dissent in a tone suggesting that the regime is collapsing, dissolved, weak and frightened. On the channel, the dissidents are from different military ranks varying from privates to sergeants reaching up to lieutenant colonels, colonels and brigadiers. This is a signifier that the dissension is from all military and security categories. The Channel pointed out that the people supported and respected the defecting soldiers and officers.

Al-Jazeera promoted joining the free army by hundreds of military personnel, soldiers and officers. On its screen, defections were not exclusive to military and security members. They also included media personnel, chief officers, judges, the Prime Minister Riyadh Hijab. This means that all the laborers categories revolted against the government.

In accordance to Al-Jazeera, the regime found difficulty in mobilizing its strongly loyal forces as these forces can't be deployed all over Syria. This is an implicit message suggesting that the regime's soldiers belong to the Alawite sect. they are strongly loyal to Al-Assad because of their common sectarian affiliation. "The loyalty of some soldiers to Al-Assad may not be sufficient to lengthen the reign's period for more decades."<sup>399</sup> This is a significance of the few numbers of the soldiers who are loyal to Al-Assad as the Alawite sect is considered one of the Syrian minorities. "The fragility of the repressive regimes is only uncovered when it surprises the world when they fall for reasons not expected by anyone."<sup>400</sup> This is an implicit annunciation that the end of the

395 25 September 2011. "ما استطاعت العمليات العسكرية حتى الآن كبح جماح المتظاهرين المنادين بالحرية."

396 25 October 2011. "عيبًا تحاول السلطات منذ أشهر إخماد ثورة الحرية."

397 05 August 2011. "يبدو أن قوات الأمن فشلت في وقف التظاهرات."

398 18 December 2011. "فشل الحسم العسكري في ترويض المدن الثائرة."

399 04 October 2011. "ولاء بعض الجند للرئيس الأسد قد لا يكفي لإدامة الحكم مزيداً من العقود."

400 14 October 2011. "هشاشة أنظمة القمع لا تتكشف إلا و هي تفاجئ العالم بسقوطها من حيث لم يتوقع أحد."

regime is very close. It may take place at any time and the world will be soon surprised by the end of this reign.

Al-Jazeera mentioned that the death of some chief officers – i.e. high-ranked ones such as colonels, brigadiers and major generals - was a result of a conflict inside the Syrian military institution. This is an implicit message whose purpose is discrediting the regime's propaganda which presents these officers as martyrs murdered by the criminal armed gangs. The Channel assured that there were deep splits within the decision-making circle, which is a significance that there are conflicts inside Al-Assad family and conflicts between this family and the chief Alawite officers. That is, the common sectarian affiliation is no longer a strength factor of the regime's.

### **11 – Who Is Fighting alongside the Regular Forces?**

In 2013, Al-Jazeera pointed out the groups which shared and supported the regime armed forces: Lebanese Hezbollah, Iranian soldiers and officers, Iraqi militants and Russian combatants.

The Channel mainly concentrated on Hezbollah's activities. On one hand, it tried to portray it as a party which assaulted, tried to seize the Syrian regions, bombed the Syrians and reinforced its positions to support the regular forces. On the other hand, however, Al-Jazeera portrayed it as a weak party which received the blows of the armed opposition without being able to encounter them. On Al-Jazeera's screen, the opposition armed combatants seemed stronger than those of Hezbollah. They bombed and seized the party's positions in the Lebanese and Syrian lands, killed its militant members, destroyed its cars, and insisted to continue until victory. The Channel's correspondents interviewed the opposition militants who talked in a tone that suggested confidence in victory. They assured that beating Hezbollah is only a matter of time.

Al-Jazeera also adopted videos transmitted on the internet by the free army in order to show their military operations against Hezbollah's positions. This channel has changed into a media marketer of the opposition's media.

Al-Jazeera intimidated from Hezbollah's capture of cities. This intimidation may be considered as an incitement of the Syrians to join the armed opposition factions in order to defend the homeland as Hezbollah may control Syrian regions which will eventually lead to the regime's victory.

In addition to Hezbollah, the Iraqi Liwa' Abu Al-Fadl Al-Abbas<sup>401</sup> supports the regime militarily. Hezbollah and this Liwa' interfere into many Syrian regions with the pretext of protecting and defending the religious tombs and Aal Al-Bayt's<sup>402</sup> holy shrines like the holy shrines of Al Sayyidah Zaynab and Al Sayyidah Ruqayyah<sup>403</sup>. Al-Jazeera's purpose of mentioning all these details is assuring the regime and its supporters' sectarianism. The Shiite minority is trying to

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401 Abu Al-Fadl Al-Abbas is Imam Hussein's brother. His father is Imam Ali. He is considered one of the most important persons for the Shiite sect.

402 Aal Al-Bayt are the prophet Muhammad's descendants. The Shiite sect considers them impeccable. They should also be followed and their commands should be complied with.

403 The granddaughters of the prophet Muhammad. They have a great dignity for the Shiite sect.

govern the Sunni majority. The same thing applies to Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Iranian military participation in favor of the regime.

The Channel popularized the fear of dividing Syria on a sectarian basis if this alliance which contains Hezbollah, Iran and the regime won. This intimidation may inflame and strengthen hatred and feeds the civil war with sectarian poison.

Al-Jazeera also drew the attention to the participation of Hezbollah, Iran and the Iraqi combatants in many Syrian cities, which even have no religious Shiite shrines. This is an implicit significance that the value of protecting the regime by these forces on any patch of the Syrian land is considered for them like the protection of the Shiite shrines. That is, defending the regime has become a religious responsibility as it is the only Arab regime which can preserve the Shiite sect and allows its spread.

In accordance to Al-Jazeera, there are Operation Rooms supervised by Iranian officers. These officers manage the battles in many cities. The Syrian regular soldiers receive the orders from them and execute these orders. According to a video<sup>404</sup>, the Syrian officers cannot even give leaves to the soldiers. Everything, big or small, is in the hands of the Iranian officers. This is a significance of Al-Assad's compliance to Iran. He is a leader of a corrupt and weak regime but the Iranian support keeps his government alive. This is also a significance that Iran is using Al-Assad, on basis of a sectarian link between them, in order to attain the Shiite expansion.

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An Iranian officer manages the military operations in Syria and a Syrian soldier requests a leave from him.<sup>405</sup>

Al-Jazeera mentioned that there were Russian combatants fighting on the side of the regular forces on the Syrian land. The Channel specified a whole report<sup>406</sup> on the Russian Slavic legion. It presented this legion as a private military security company founded by professionals and reserve officers. This company recruits previous Russian officers and soldiers to work in protection tasks, securing the vital sites and freeing the hostages. However, these soldiers went outside the framework of their tasks and began fighting to support the regular forces in Syria. All this

404 09 September 2013.

405 09 September 2013.

406 18 November 2013.

happened after they got permission from the Russian government. This is a signifier of the Russian desire of Al-Assad's victory as the mutual interests make Russia send its soldiers to participate in killing the Syrians.

## The Image of The Armed Opposition on Al-Jazeera Channel

### 1 – The Story of the Free Army as presented on Al-Jazeera Channel during the stage of the formation of the armed opposition

"Armed with weapons that can be easily carried, and with firm determination in the face of repression and murder, these young people get ready to defend the Syrian activists who are trying to bring the regime down."<sup>407</sup> The voice tone of the media personnel suggests glorifying the insistence of the Free Army soldiers on defending the peaceful demonstrators and facing the regime's terrorism despite the lack of the necessary military equipment. That is, this media personnel devoted their verbal and non-verbal languages to assure the positivity of the aim of this opposition.

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Free Syrian Army members are presented as heroes on Al-Jazeera's screen.<sup>408</sup>

"They are not armed gangs, as the story of the regime states. They are, rather, soldiers who have dissented their country's national army since it decided to direct the firing of its weapons towards the armless civilians."<sup>409</sup> Through these statements, Al-Jazeera explicitly discredited the regime's propaganda which charges gangs funded by several countries of being responsible for the security turbulence in Syria. The Channel assured that the elements of FSA (the Free Syrian Army) are Syrian soldiers who did not accept the Syrian army's assaults on the citizens.

<sup>407</sup> 25 November 2011. "متسلحون بما خفت حملته من سلاح و بعزيمة لا تلين في وجه القمع و القتل يستعد هؤلاء الشباب للدفاع عن الناشطين السوريين العاملين على إسقاط النظام."

<sup>408</sup> 25 November 2011.

<sup>409</sup> 25 November 2011. "ليسوا عصابات مسلحة على ما تذهب إليه رواية النظام بل جنود انشقوا عن جيش بلادهم الوطني منذ قرر توجيه نيران أسلحته نحو المدنيين العزل."



"These soldiers, like thousands others, dissented the Arab Syrian army they refused to obey their leaders' orders to shoot the demonstrators. How could they do that while they are supposedly the protectors of the homeland and the people? The reluctance of some of them to kill the civilians cost them their lives. Others decided to face the Shabbiha and to dissent for the sake of the revolution of freedom."<sup>410</sup> This is a significance through which the Channel wanted to assure the large number of defectors and the inevitability of dissension. For it, this is the only logical result and the reaction which every soldier had to do. "How could they do that while they are supposedly the protectors of the homeland?" The purpose of this question is confirming that the function of the army is protecting Syria, not killing the people. If the commands of the leaders were not in conformity with the essence and ethics of soldiers' function, they should dissent.

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Free Syrian Army members are presented as heroes on Al-Jazeera's screen.<sup>411</sup>

In accordance with Al-Jazeera's discourse, the anti-regime soldiers are destined either to be murdered by the regime or to dissent and confront it. This is a significant style of psychological war. This media discourse makes the soldier's imagination narrow and framed. He has only two choices: either death or fighting against the murderous regime. He cannot dissent and live a normal civic peaceful life as the army and security personnel are to search and chase him and eventually kill him. Therefore, joining the armed opposition after defection is inevitable. This is an implicit message which Al-Jazeera reiterated.

410 25 November 2011.

"هؤلاء الجنود كغيرهم من آلاف آخرين انشقوا عن الجيش العربي السوري. رفضوا إطاعة أوامر قادتهم بإطلاق النار على المتظاهرين إذ كيف يفعلون و هم حماة الديار و ساكنيها؟! و بعضهم دفع حياته ثمن الامتناع عن قتل المدنيين، و بعضهم قرر المواجهة مع الشبيحة و الانشقاق نصرة لثورة الحرية".

411 25 November 2011.

(38)

Declaring defection from the Syrian army.<sup>412</sup>

"They know well that the regime is trying to drive them to the militarization of the revolution and eventually turn it into a civil war. Therefore, they say that the peacefulness of the revolution is essential for its victory. However, simultaneously, they should prevent Shabbiha and the security forces from targeting the demonstrations and funeral processions of those who were murdered by the security forces."<sup>413</sup> This is a message through which Al-Jazeera shows the soldiers' awareness and discernment of the regime's plans. At the same time, it is an implicit accusation of the Syrian government for trying to end the peacefulness of the revolution as this serves the regime's propaganda about fighting against destructive armed gangs. Al-Jazeera limited the task of the FSA to defense rather than attack. Its task is "retorting to Shabbiha and security forces" and not allowing them to assault the citizens and the demonstrators. This popularization of limiting the task of FSA to defense was prominent in 2011 and the first months of 2012.

Al-Jazeera linked the rituals of the funeral processions to the activities of the armed opposition. This means that the FSA soldiers protect the people taking part in the procession. They make sure that the route of the procession of the victims' bodies is secure, they monitor the movements of the security forces, and keep on the alert to confront any assault against the participants in the procession. On the one hand, these are signifiers that sentimentally appeal to the recipient in favor of the civilians who are incapable of completing the burial due to the regime's brutality. On the other hand, they create the popular confidence in the tasks of the armed opposition. Linking the activities of the armed opposition to the rituals of the funeral processions and death makes the effect of the media discourse greater.

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412 07 December 2011.

413 25 November 2011.

"يدركون جيدا أن النظام يسعى إلى دفعهم إلى عسكرة الثورة و من ثم تحويلها إلى حرب أهلية، لذلك يقولون إن سلمية الثورة أمر ضروري لا تتصاها. لكن في الوقت عينه ينبغي ردع الشبيحة و القوى الأمنية عندما تستهدف المظاهرة أو جناز من قتل بنيران القوى الأمنية".

## 2 –Descriptions and Names of the Opposition

The descriptions of the armed opposition were negative only when the Channel recalled the regime's propaganda: 'Armed gangs', 'terrorist groups', 'vandals' and 'infiltrated elements'<sup>414</sup>. However, simultaneously, Al-Jazeera's media personnel recalled these descriptions in a tone that suggested their disagreement to them. It also suggested that they believed that there was an honorable opposition the goal of which was bringing the regime down and protecting the people.

Al-Jazeera gave the title of "revolutionaries" and "the Syrian revolutionaries"<sup>415</sup> (41 times) to all the opposition combatants whether Syrians, those of Al-Nusra Front, or even those of ISIS (Iraq and Syria Islamic State). This is an implicit admission that they were not armed law breakers or terrorists as the regime's propaganda presented them.

"FSA" (105 times), "the opposition forces" (7 times) are titles which suggest that all the fighters in all the Syrian governorates and cities are fighting under one flag which is that of FSA. Al-Jazeera helped fix this mental image. When the soldiers started to dissent the regular army, they called themselves FSA. They were not a cohesive organization with a clear structure. However, Al-Jazeera promoted this title so much that a large part of the Syrian people believed that, during a few days or months, a massive army that is as strong as the regime's army was formed<sup>416</sup>, an army which spread over every hand span of the Syrian land.

Al-Jazeera popularized the opposition's brigades, battalions, platoons and squads through showing their statements which they had uploaded on the internet to declare their formation or achievements. Advertising the formation of new military units such as squads or brigades has a significance of how widespread the armed opposition is and of the availability of the combatant human cadre. A lot of these battalions and squads' names reflect their Islamic affiliation. Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed Brigade<sup>417</sup> is a signifier that their example is the Islamic leader Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed (a Sunni icon)<sup>418</sup>, which is another implicit significance that suggests confidence in victory on the regime's army as Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed was never defeated. Al-Farouq Battalion<sup>419</sup> was named after Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, the second Islamic Caliph who has a prominent position for the Sunni Muslims. Al-Furqan Battalion<sup>420</sup> – i.e. the Quran Battalion – is a signifier that the fight against the regime is a heavenly duty and prescription. The Capital Martyrs Battalion<sup>421</sup> is a

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414 "عصابات مسلحة"، "مجموعات إرهابية"، "مخربين"، "مهندسين". 414

415 الثوار و الثائرون

416 While being in Syria and contacting with the different categories of the Syrian society in 2011, the researcher noticed this fact. The opponents of the regime strongly believed the idea of forming a regulated 'free' army in a short period.

417 07 December 2011. Twice.

418 Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed, a companion of the prophet Muhammad. He was a military Leader and the Prophet called him The Drawn Sword of Allah. He fought numerous battles for Islamic purposes.

419 25 November 2011, 08 May 2012.

420 12 March 2012.

421 12 March 2012.

significance that the death of the opponents during the struggle is certainly to grant them Paradise as they will not be dead, they will, rather, be alive under the care of Allah. Another faction is the Battalions of Islam Brigade<sup>422</sup>. All these names helped Islamize the armed opposition, and may have strongly helped to mobilize the people in Syria against the regime.

"The Revolutionary Military Council"<sup>423</sup>, "the Common Leadership of FSA", "many battalions under the Revolutionary Military Council"<sup>424</sup> are names which signify the organizational situation of the opposition. These descriptions show the opposition as a well-built structure under a common leadership, not individual squads which fight without planning.

Some of the names of the battalions were after the regions as a significance of the fighters' affiliation and love of their cities. These names are considered as an explicit declaration that these regions are opponents to the regime.

### 3 – How Did Al-Jazeera Cover the activities of The Armed Opposition?

#### 3.1 – Popularization; Promotion

The Channel popularized FSA through assuring that thousands of civilians joined the armed struggle to support this army<sup>425</sup>. In 2011, Al-Jazeera reiterated emphasizing that no day passed in Syria without showing a recorded material or a video attributed to defectors from the regular army of various ranks, numbers and regions. The Channel promoted the brigades and battalions which were admitting volunteers. It tried to create a mental image which suggested that the people respected the soldiers of FSA and sympathized with them.

(39)



Declaring defection from the Syrian army.<sup>426</sup>

422 14 January 2013.

423 08 October 2012.

424 08 October 2012.

425 09 January 2012, 08 May 2012.

426 04 July 2011.

### 3.2 – Detailing the Activities of the Armed

The Channel employed phrases which suggested its concern in the details of the activities of the Armed opposition soldiers: where they hid, where they organized their plans, how they managed their battles against the regime and so on. For this type of statements, the media personnel of Al-Jazeera used a voice tone that suggested the fear and horror the regime forces created. In the meantime, this suggested the greatness of FSA whose individuals worked together to protect the country from the tyranny of the regime's dictatorship. "They make many houses as shelters and hides, and in these houses, they prepare plans to defend themselves and the demonstrators."<sup>427</sup> This is a significance of the secrecy of the armed movements and of their defiance of the brutality of the regime's forces despite all difficulties.

"On the front lines of the city, the FSA combatants seem cautious when they enter these buildings. They patrol the front lines, touring sites which had witnessed violent combats to make sure that no government forces have advanced."<sup>428</sup> This is a narrative style in a voice tone that suggests caution and anxiety about the fall of sudden missiles. It also suggests the control of FSA on new regions. This method also points out Al-Jazeera's aligned attitude with the opposition forces.

Al-Jazeera paid attention to the FSA training sessions: where the soldiers trained, what sort of weapons they used in these training sessions, how they distributed the tasks among each other. Some fighters spread inside the city while others improvised explosive devices. Al-Jazeera's videos displayed the opponent opposition during training. It also showed the skills of street wars which the soldiers had. All this was presented in a voice tone which suggested their firmness and confidence of victory.

(40)



Al-Jazeera's journalist with the opposition armed people during their training.<sup>429</sup>

<sup>427</sup> 09 January 2012. "من بيوت كثيرة يتخذون ملجأ للاختباء و التواري عن الأنظار و فيها أيضا يضعون خططاً للدفاع عن أنفسهم و عن المتظاهرين".

<sup>428</sup> 08 May 2012.

"على الخطوط الأمامية للمدينة يبدو مقاتلي الجيش السوري الحر حذرين عند دخولهم هذه المباني، يقومون بدوريات على الخطوط الأمامية، يجوبون مواقعاً شهدت قتالاً عنيفاً للتأكد من عدم تقدم قوات الحكومة".

<sup>429</sup> 22 July 2013.

### 3.3 – The Weakness of the Armed Factions

Many times, FSA appeared on Al-Jazeera's screen as a weak army which did not have sufficient skills in using the weapons like the anti-tank missiles. The Channel also concentrated on the fact that the FSA soldiers lacked offensive weapons and that even their defensive weapons were inclusive to military rifles, while the regime's forces used all types of armament. The voice tone of the journalists tried to entice the recipient in favor of these soldiers who, despite their military inexperience, struggled and resisted the regime's violence.

Al-Jazeera reiterated that FSA was fighting without an air coverage which protected it from the repeated and continuous bombardment of the regime's forces and that bringing closure to the battles was conditional upon the arrival of the heavy weapons to FSA. This is an implicit summon to providing FSA with armament. In summoning to arming the opposition, the Channel depended on a hinting method some times and on an explicit one other times.

(41)



The opposition armed people in a news context which shows them as heroes who are capable of challenging the regime despite the limited equipment.<sup>430</sup>

### 3.4 – The Strength of the Armed Factions

In 2012, while the official Syrian media was popularizing a propaganda stating that the military closure started, Al-Jazeera pointed out the opposition's anti-propaganda which stated that its soldiers started severe battles against the regime's forces in order to bring closure. Under this propaganda, the Channel concentrated on pointing out the field successes of the opposition such as capturing armored personnel carriers and military vehicles after a severe fight against Al-Assad battalions. Al-Jazeera depended on magnifying the image of the battles fought by the opposition: "Severe fight"<sup>431</sup>, "Violent battles"<sup>432</sup> (13 times) and so on. This helps present the opponents as heroes, who are patient and strong. Simultaneously, the Channel described the Syrian army as "Al-Assad battalions", "Shabbiha" and "Al-Assad gangs". This is a message which suggests that the

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<sup>430</sup> 08 October 2012.

<sup>431</sup> 02 February 2012. "منارلة شديدة"

<sup>432</sup> "معارك عنيفة".

opposition has a high legitimacy as it fights against a tyrant, not against a legitimate army which deserves the respect of people.

(42)



The opposition during facing the Syrian army.<sup>433</sup>

"A real war field, but not on the borders, takes place in the depths of the old quarters in Douma; in Damascus Suburb."<sup>434</sup> This is a message through which Al-Jazeera wanted to magnify the military events for two purposes. The first one was showing the opposition as a strong army encountering a regular army armed with the strongest equipment. The second purpose was disparaging the regime which fought battles inside the country, in the quarters of Damascus Suburb, whereas, in the meantime, its forces surrendered to the Israeli occupation. The army does not go to the front line to defend the Golan Heights. It, rather, kills its people.

"It's clear that they have more equipment than FSA, but the latter states that it won't surrender. It is, rather, getting ready for a long and hard battle."<sup>435</sup> This is a message whose aim is lifting the morale of the armed opposition and raising the confidence of the civilian opposition in it. This is also a significance that the regime has more equipment but the FSA excels it in intention and determination. "The revolutionaries believe that their steadfast stance for two years is a balance kept in their account for a battle the winning of which is said to require one hour's patience."<sup>436</sup> This is a message motivating the anti-regime people to carry on with encounter. Describing the opponent army, Al-Jazeera concentrated on terms such as 'patience, steadfastness, not surrender, armed with faith.' This vocabulary plays the role of doses which the Channel administrates in order to inspire hope in the opposition soldiers and their civilian supporters. The soldiers are steadfast on this land despite the little equipment they have for defending it.

433 03 December 2012.

434 13 July 2012. "ساحة حرب حقيقية لكنها ليست على الحدود إنها في عمق الأحياء القديمة في دوما بريف دمشق."

435 08 May 2012. "و من الواضح أنهم يتفوقون بالمعدات على الجيش السوري الحر، لكن الأخير يقول إنه لن يستسلم بل ينتهي لمعركة طويلة و صعبة."

436 03 April 2013. "الثوار يرون أن صمودهم عامين هو رصيد في معركة قيل أن كسبها يحتاج صبر ساعة."



(43)



The low view helps show the opposition armed people as heroes.<sup>437</sup>

In 2013, Al-Jazeera pointed out the strengths more than the weaknesses of the armed opposition. "In the horizon, one of the regime army's helicopters appears. The eyes monitor it without bothering that much. They attribute this to the fact that the Front has got anti-aircraft artillery which is able to dispose of the helicopter."<sup>438</sup> This is a message which shows that Al-Nusra Front is self-confident; it has weapons, a strong-armed opposition which is indifferent about the regime's military strength. This is one of Al-Jazeera's methods in the psychological war. It portrays the regime's army like a beast against the civilians only while the Channel dwarfs its forces when it talks about the army's struggle against the soldiers of the armed opposition.

"A siege on Aleppo airport where the fighters of the FSA employed what they have of weapons in order to paralyze these aircrafts which remained motionless on the ground without being able to move as they are within the range of the weapons of FSA."<sup>439</sup> The Channel portrayed the aircrafts like a human being who may be paralyzed. This is a mental image which shows the regime's military capabilities as weak ones which are crushed by the opposition's army which is getting stronger day by day.

### 3.5 –Opposition Actions as Presented by Al-Jazeera

Al-Jazeera showed that the opposition's military actions targeted the regime's military and security forces and headquarters only. This is a significance that the opposition is innocent of the charges which the regime directs to it: assaulting the civilian citizens and murdering them, robbing and destroying their properties, displacing them, and so on. In accordance to Al-Jazeera, the number of demonstrators increased due to their feeling that FSA was protecting them from the bullets of the regime's security and military forces. This is an indication of the responsibility the armed opposition has, which is namely the protection of the opponent civilians.

<sup>437</sup> 03 April 2013.

<sup>438</sup> 08 January 2013. "تلوح في الأفق مروحية تابعة لجيش النظام فترصدها الأعين دون إنزعاج كبير، يردون ذلك إلى أن لدى الجبهة مدفعية مضادة للطيران و هي كغيلة بابعاد الطائرة".

<sup>439</sup> 23 June 2013. "حصار على مطار حلب استخدم فيه مقاتلو الجيش الحر مالدبيهم من أسلحة لشل حركة هذه الطائرات التي ظلت رابضة على أرض المطار لا تستطيع التحرك لأنها أصبحت في مرمى نيران الجيش الحر".



The achievements of FSA and the different opposition battalions ranged from small ones such as capturing some armored vehicles and armored personnel carriers to those that can change the Syrian map such as capturing entire regions and very important strategic military positions.

The Channel employed two methods in presenting the achievements of the armed opposition. The first one was the general description where Al-Jazeera did not accurately define the nature of these achievements. For example, "FSA inflicted the regime tremendous losses in several regions."<sup>440</sup> This method unleashes the imagination of the recipient. The second method was specific identification where the Channel gives full or nearly full details of the achievements of the opposition: "They controlled the Signals and Electronic Battalion."<sup>441</sup>

"The seizure of many government buildings including Cultural Centers"<sup>442</sup> is a significance that the regime has lost control over the government institutions and the infrastructure.

The Channel signposted the significance of the achievements of the armed opposition through concentrating on the quality of the targets attacked by the soldiers of the opposition. For example, "FSA attacks the greatest military base"<sup>443</sup>, "FSA announces the destruction of an air missile battalion"<sup>444</sup>, "FSA controls the air defense battalion."<sup>445</sup> This is an indication of the opposition's offensive stance and the regime's defensive one. This style was most recurrently employed in 2013. Al-Jazeera moved from the stage of popularizing the necessity of arming the armed opposition to the stage of raising the morale and the concentration on the strengths of this opposition.

The regime seemed as if it were targeted in all its military formations. The armed are targeting the most important military sites like the sites of the air force. They attack battalions of different specializations. For instance, Al-Jazeera mentioned that FSA controlled a main headquarter used by the regime for jamming space channels which transmitted the news of the Syrian revolution. This is a significance that the regime is trying to hide its crimes through jamming the media. It is also a signifier of the importance of the mass media for the armed opposition, as media is one of the most important means of its victory. "At the recent time, FSA has controlled most of the military battalions in Damascus Suburb and on the circumference of Damascus International Airport."<sup>446</sup> This is a significance of the opposition's seizure of the capital, Damascus, the regime's most important fortress. It is also a signifier that the regime's defensive lines have fallen apart as Damascus Suburb which represents a defensive line that surrounds Damascus has fallen in the opposition's control. The same applies to Damascus International Airport, the largest and most important Syrian airport, which is 25 km away from the capital. It is considered a significant

440 29 June 2012. "كَيْد الجيش الحر جيش النظام خسائر فادحة في عدة مناطق"

441 30 November 2012. "سيطروا على كتيبة الإشارة و الإلكترونيات"

442 08 October 2012. "الاستيلاء على عدد من المباني الحكومية و من ضمنها المراكز الثقافية"

443 02 August 2012. "الحر يهاجم أكبر قاعدة عسكرية"

444 18 September 2012, 03 April 2013. "الحر يعلن تدمير كتيبة صواريخ جوية"

445 18 September 2012, 03 April 2013. "الحر يسيطر على كتيبة الدفاع الجوي"

446 30 November 2012. "سيطر الجيش الحر في الأونة الأخيرة على معظم الكتل العسكرية في ريف دمشق وفي محيط مطار دمشق الدولي"

defensive line and a main base of providing the regime's forces with the aids coming by air in addition to its vital strategic position for those who control it.

The Channel rendered that FSA is trying to demilitarize the regime's army of all types of weapons. Therefore, it was trying to destroy them when it failed to capture them. It is notable that the concentration of the Channel on targeting the civil and military airports in several areas by the opposition was great. This is a signifier of FSA's determination and desire to destroy the air bases of the regime's army which are employed in bombarding the civilians. This is also a significance of the strength of FSA that realized qualitative military leaps which will end in victory. FSA captures anti-aircraft missiles, consequently, it can shoot the regime's aircrafts down and the regime will no longer be able to confront the opposition's forces easily.

"FSA controls half the city or more"<sup>447</sup>, "It controls the border areas."<sup>448</sup> This indicates that the geographical areas FSA controls are larger than those controlled by the regime. FSA controls important roads which connect the Syrian governorates, entire cities and vital positions. Al-Jazeera always indicated the strategic importance of every city that falls under the control of the armed opposition.

Releasing the civilian detainees and armed captives were also part of the tasks of the armed opposition which Al-Jazeera handled. This is a significance that the duty of FSA is protecting the civilians and defending them in addition to freeing the captives, which is also a message directed to the Syrian people the implication of which means that FSA is trustworthy. It never leaves its captives trapped by the regime. It, rather, sacrifices its soul for the sake of the civilian citizens.

"FSA kills elements from Hezbollah"<sup>449</sup>, "It destroys their cars and military vehicles"<sup>450</sup>, "It confronts infiltration attempts into the Syrian land by Hezbollah."<sup>451</sup> These are indications of the presence of Hezbollah's forces in the Syrian struggle against the opposition forces. They are also signifiers of the competence of the revolutionaries in confronting not only the regime's forces but also its allies of Hezbollah who defeated Israel in the war of 2006<sup>452</sup>. This is a fierce enemy, but the opposition forces were able to defeat it on the Syrian arena. This coverage of the victories of the opposition can be considered as a message directed to the supporting countries stating that the opposition is worthy of being depended upon.

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447 02 August 2012. "الحر يسيطر على نصف المدينة أواخر".

448 02 August 2012, 06 June 2013. "يسيطر على المناطق الحدودية".

449 23 April 2013, 13 May 2013. "الحر يقتل عناصر من حزب الله".

450 13 May 2013. "يدمر سياراتهم و ألياتهم العسكرية".

451 10 May 2013. "يتصدى لمحاولات تسلل لحزب الله إلى الأراضي السورية".

452 July War, according to the common name in Lebanon. It started on 12 July 2006 and went on for 34 days. The Arab opinion divided about this war between supporters and opponents of Hezbollah. However, the supporters consider that the party realized a big victory over Israel.

The defensive status of the armed forces was never absent even during the period when Al-Jazeera tried to greatly point out the strength of this opposition in 2013. "FSA deterred incursion attempt"<sup>453</sup>, "The Free Syrian Army's battalions have faced several attacks"<sup>454</sup>.

### 3.6 – Battles and Their Significations

The Channel did not point out the regime's military initiatives against the armed opposition such as 'the regime forces attack the strongholds of the armed forces and bombard their centers'. These actions were rarely mentioned in the studied reports and this gave an impression of the inability of the regime's army to confront the opposition's battalions. Simultaneously, this absence may make the recipient feel that all the regime's violent actions were against armless people. In comparison, Al-Jazeera did not intensively mention the initiatives of the armed opposition against the regime forces especially in 2011 and 2012. The Channel did not mention that the opposition forces attack regime's positions or detain regime's soldiers. This style kept the regime's image as a tyrant beast which confronted the peaceful people's will, killing, bombarding and destroying with no reason.

Al-Jazeera employed different terms to substitute the explicit mention of both the regime's and the opposition's initiatives: "violent clashes" and "violent battles" (13 times), "fierce fight"<sup>455</sup>. This vocabulary on the face of it suggests that the opposition forces encounter the regime forces only, so its weapons were never directed towards the civilians as the regime claims. Secondly, it suggests that the two military powers are equal. Thirdly, it suggests the two situations of attack and defense, forwarding and regression for both parties. No party outdoes the other in the word 'clash'. The mention of the military initiative of a party means an offensive situation of this party. Al-Jazeera did not employ this method in 2011 and the first half of 2012. However, in 2013 Al-Jazeera condensed pointing out the opposition's initiatives such as attacking military airports, controlling important positions and capturing regime's military equipment. This coverage moved the opposition's situation from the case of moving between defense and attack to that of attack and it, consequently, seemed stronger, more steadfast and more confident of victory.

Al-Jazeera described the battles as "fierce and violent" (13 times) and "the most violent for months."<sup>456</sup> It labeled them as continuous and perseverant: "Daily clashes"<sup>457</sup>, "sequential battles for over a month"<sup>458</sup>, "Battles have continued for the third day in a row"<sup>459</sup>, "continuous battles"

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453 17 October 2013. "الحر تصدى لمحاولة اقتحام"

454 21 February 2013. "تصدت كتائب الحر لعدة هجمات"

455 02 February 2012. "منازلة شديدة"

456 08 October 2012. "الأعنف منذ شهور"

457 14 April 2013. "اشتباكات يومية"

458 08 October 2012. "معارك مستمرة منذ أكثر من شهر"

459 14 January 2013. "معارك دخلت يومها الثالث على التوالي"

(8 times), "clashes are the title of the Syrian scene"<sup>460</sup>, "the situation is still ablaze"<sup>461</sup> and so on. This portraying suggests that the regime is neither capable of bringing a closure to the battles, nor of controlling or retrieving the regions. At the same time, it suggests the strength of the armed opposition, since despite the few equipment and weapons, the soldiers keep clashing with the regime's forces and deter their progress. This is an indication of the armed opposition's endurance; even if the battles continued for a long time, they would never yield or surrender.

Al-Jazeera promoted the names which the armed opposition gave to the battles. "Battle of Releasing Captives"<sup>462</sup> which is a signifier of the loyalty and fidelity of the opposition soldiers to each other. They did not nor will let down their comrades who the regime forces detained. So, they are to confront the depression and brutality in order to release these captives. "Al-Qadisiyah Battle"<sup>463</sup> whose name has an important significance because Muslims had given this name to one of their battles against the Persians in 636 AD. This battle was in the context of the Islamic conquests<sup>464</sup>. The armed opposition revived the name and gave it to one of their battles against the regime. This is an implicit indication which again assures that the opposition soldiers are fighting the enemies of Allah, the disbelievers, so as to spread the religion of Allah and impose Islam again.

"The We-Are-Coming Battle"<sup>465</sup> is a signifier of the opposition's confidence in victory. It is a name that is employed in psychological war as it is directed to the regime's soldiers so as to discourage them and make them feel that the opposition soldiers are going to crush them soon.

"The Earthquake Battle"<sup>466</sup> is a two-sided signifier. First, it is a metonymy of the strength of the coming opposition's attack. They are like an earthquake which will destroy the pillars of the regime. Second, it has a religious significance; 'The Earthquake' chapter in the Quran is chapter 99 and the number of its verses is 8. This chapter talks about the horrors of the Judgment Day and how things will be then. The earth will be shaken with an earthquake and tremble. Everything on it will fall down, the mountains will fall apart, and man will be stunned and afraid. Then man will be judged and shown the results of his deeds in front of God. Whoever did good will go to paradise and whoever did evil will go to hell. The opposition soldiers' adoption of this name – the Earthquake Battle – indicates their confidence that paradise will be theirs and that they are the pious slaves of Allah who will not be afraid of the horrors of the Judgment Day because they are applying the religion of Allah and supporting Allah through their struggle against the disbelieving tyranny – Al-Assad.

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460 14 April 2013, 31 October 2013. "الاشتباكات عنوان المشهد السوري"

461 01 October 2013. "لا يزال الوضع مشتعلاً"

462 23 April 2013. "معركة فك الأسرى"

463 23 June 2013. "معركة القادسية"

464 According to the cultural legacy of Muslims, Islamic conquests were a collection of military wars the Muslims fought in order to spread Islam.

465 01 October 2013. "معركة قادمون"

466 08 October 2013. "معركة الزلزلة"

### 3.7 – Islamization of Armed Opposition

A collection of details gave the Syrian revolution an Islamic character. Nearly no report was free of the soldiers' cheers: "God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest". They cheered 'God is the greatest' during most of their movements: when they fired with mortars or mechanical guns, when they moved from a place to another, when they saw the results of the air bombardment, when they stood in front of cameras with their guns, and so on. Al-Jazeera media personnel pointed out these cheers in several parts of the report. Sometimes in the introduction before starting the media account, we hear 'God is the Greatest'. Sometimes, the journalist pauses and gives way to these cheers. Other times, the report is concluded with cheers of 'God is the Greatest'. These cheers have an implicit significance which means that the opposition soldiers are performing Jihad against the disbelievers; as they were used during the Muslim wars against the polytheists.

(44)



The opposition armed people badge their foreheads with Islamic slogans.<sup>467</sup>

The names the opposition chose for many operations and battles had an Islamic characteristic. Al-Jazeera pointed out these names. For instance, "The battle of victory from God and near conquest"<sup>468</sup> was for freeing certain regions. It indicates the opposition's military war against the regime is a religious duty and that their victory is certain because they are fighting the enemy of Allah in the way of Allah. The purpose of the conquest or conquests was obliging the polytheist disbelieving countries to have faith in Islam. "The Earthquake Battle"<sup>469</sup>, in addition to the Islamic signifier, has a prodigious, horrifying characteristic through resembling the battles of the factions to the earthquake which will turn the earth upside down and throw down the regime's strongest military sites or those which mostly deter the advance of the revolutionaries.

The most prominent slogan of the opposition was: "Our leader forever is our master Muhammad"<sup>470</sup> a significance that the soldiers obey the orders of Islam in their war against the

467 21 September 2013

468 08 October 2012. "معركة نصر من الله وفتح قريب"

469 08 October 2013. Named after 'The Earthquake' chapter in the Quran. It is chapter 99. The number of its verses is 8. "معركة الزلزاله"

470 17 December 2012. "قائدنا للأبد سيدنا محمد"

regime and that the leader of their revolution is the prophet Muhammad. This makes them seem pious believers, loyal to the Islamic doctrine and defending it. This message can polarize a large number of Muslims.

"God's soldiers passed here"<sup>471</sup> is a slogan which Al-Jazeera pointed out many times. This statement was usually handwritten on the walls by the opposition soldiers when they captured regime's centers, especially security and military ones. This slogan is considered a defiance to the soldiers of the regime's Syrian army. "Al-Assad's soldiers passed here" was the statement that the regime's soldiers left behind them as a fingerprint written on the walls of some regions where they gained victory. The contrast here is between the soldiers of Allah and those of Al-Assad. The regime's soldiers are affiliated to a repressive human being whom they defend. However, the opposition militants are affiliated only to Allah. They are the soldiers of God, the only God. This is an indication of the inevitability of their victory because in the end Allah will certainly be victorious.

The opposition soldiers used 8 times phrases that showed their faith and gratitude to God for the advances and victories they realized: 'Praise be to Allah, we have freed a region', 'with the help of Allah, the siege of the airport has been achieved' and so on. These phrases again prove that the war is between the pious Muslims and a repressive, disbelieving and polytheist regime.

### 3.8 – Al-Nusra Front

When the pro-regime channels were trying to present Al-Nusra Front as a terrorist organization, which horrified people, sent human bombers who bombed themselves in the civilian areas, Al-Jazeera was trying to portray this front in a different way. The Channel called the elements of this Front "revolutionaries". It showed that the majority of the elements were Syrians and that Al-Nusra also contained a number of foreigners whom it called migrants from different Arab and Islamic countries. Al-Jazeera highlighted the two categories of this front: the Muhajireen and the Ansar<sup>472</sup>. This is a significance of resembling them to the companions of the prophet, and that the struggle is between the men of Islam, the soldiers of Allah and a disbelieving polytheist regime. This idea can polarize the extremists and incite them either to join the revolution's armed factions or to support the armed in all ways as the Ansar did to the Muhajireen who migrated with the prophet Muhammad to bring victory to Islam.

"Al-Nusra front are men who came to support the vulnerable in Syria after they had been let down by all the world."<sup>473</sup> This is a message the purpose of which is polishing the image of this

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471 03 April 2013. "جنود الله مروا من هنا"

472 The Muhajireen and the Ansar are the companions of the prophet Muhammad. For Muslims, they are the best people after the prophets. The Muhajireen believed in the prophet and migrated with him from Mecca to Al-Medina in order to get rid of the assaults of the 'polytheists'. They left their families and property behind desiring to please Allah and support the religion of Islam. The Ansar are the citizens of Al-Medina who received the prophet and the Muhajireen. They shared their homes and property with the Muhajireen.

473 08 January 2013. "جبهة النصرة رجال جاؤوا لنصرة المستضعفين في سوريا حيث خذلهم العالم كله"

organization and presenting it as the savior who is to support the Syrian people whom all countries let down leaving them under the control of an oppressive regime.

(45)



The soldiers of Jabhat Al-Nusra seem as heroes who are saviors of the people.<sup>474</sup>

Al-Jazeera correspondents very closely accompanied the militants of Al-Nusra Front. According to these correspondents, the battles of these militants took place in very close distances from the regime's soldiers. The Channel covered the activities of the soldiers against the regime's forces in a way that suggested their credibility and genuineness towards the Syrian people.

Al-Jazeera had interviews field leaders from Al-Nusra Front. They talked in a confident and strong tone about their siege of important regions, regime centers and military airports. They talked about their performing an air and land siege. This is a signifier of their military power which equals the regime's and overcomes it.

Through these interviews, Al-Nusra leaders were able to promote their goal which is summed up as follows: establishing an Islamic state which is based on *Shurah* (i.e. a consultative council) and where justice and benevolence prevail.

### 3.9 – Opposition Weapons as They Appeared on Al-Jazeera Screen

At the beginnings of the formation of the armed opposition, Al-Jazeera recurrently assured that they had only light weapons which could confront tanks, artilleries and missiles. Mortars, machine guns and mines (12 times) were of the most prominent oppositions weapons according to Al-Jazeera presentation. "Locally made missiles"<sup>475</sup> is an indication of the hard work of the armed opposition and their insistence on defying the regime's heavy weapons even if by explosive devices or missiles which are not as strong as the regime's.

In the first half of 2012, Al-Jazeera's discourse became this way: the availability of weapons is no longer an obstacle as the smuggled ones have become available and easy to buy from corrupt officers. This is an indication of the disloyalty of the regime's Syrian army soldiers and officers and of the persistence of the armed opposition on the military confrontation. Despite their poverty,

474 08 January 2013.

475 03 August 2013. "صواريخ محلية الصنع"

the opponent soldiers on their own account buy weapons by which they will end the regime and dispose of its darkness. Simultaneously, the channel's discourse included hints of the necessity of financing and arming the opposition with heavy weapons.

In the second half of 2012, the channel's discourse started to change. It moved from the stage of the opposition's urgent need for being armed to the stage of raising the morale through assuring that the opposition are using heavy weapons. It is worth mentioning that the Channel did not accurately refer to the sources of these weapons. In addition, Al-Jazeera obfuscated the sources of providing the armed opposition with money, machines, vehicles and modern 4-wheel-drive cars. The same applies to providing field emergency devices and medicines and so on. The Channel did not also mention the sources of providing the opposition with reconnaissance and intelligence information about the movements and positions of the regime and its adjuvant forces.

"Faisal 1, Missile made by Al-Nusra Front. Its range is 8 km"<sup>476</sup> is a signifier of Al-Nusra's possession of the technical and material ability to make weapons. The name 'Faisal 1' has an implicit significance which indicates that it is the first type of a series that will be produced respectively. Also, this name is indirectly connected to the names of some Saudi princes and kings. Moreover, the word Faisal' in Arabic means 'the sword', 'the ruler' or 'the one who judges right from wrong'. This is a significance that Al-Nusra Front is the symbol of justice, which is part of its propaganda. It introduced itself as the one which will apply the justice and benevolence among the citizens on basis of the Muslim Sharia again.

Missiles whose range is 1200 meters, in addition to anti-aircraft weapons, AA 23<sup>477</sup>. In accordance to Al-Jazeera, these weapons form the second striking force which Al-Nusra Front has. This is a significance of the military force which this front has.

### 3.10 – Israeli Fears

Al-Jazeera indirectly indicated to the Israeli fears from the armed opposition. "The Israeli army sent fortifications to Al-Maabir region and the settlers were ordered not to approach the borders. The developments of Al-Qunetirah happened simultaneously with advances of FSA in Daraa Al-Balad."<sup>478</sup> This is a message which contains two pivots. First, Al-Jazeera indirectly hinted that Al-Assad is an ally of Israel. When the Syrian regime controlled the frontal city of Daraa, Israel did not have any worries. The second pivot is that Al-Jazeera hinted that the real enemy of Israel was the Syrian armed opposition. When this opposition controlled Daraa, Israel was afraid and started to solidify its forces on the borders. This message of Al-Jazeera is an attempt to disparage the regime's propaganda about its resistance and solid stance against the Zionist enemy.

<sup>476</sup> 08 January 2013. "صاروخ ( فيصل واحد ) من صنع جبهة النصرة، مداه 8 كم".

<sup>477</sup> 08 January 2013.

<sup>478</sup> 06 June 2013. "الجيش الإسرائيلي أرسل تعزيزات إلى منطقة المعبر و أمر المستوطنين بعدم الإقتراب من الحدود. تطورات القنيطرة تزامنت من تقدم ميداني للجيش الحر في درعا البلد".



### 3.11 – Declarations of Armed Opposition Officers and Soldiers

In 2011, Al-Jazeera did not send its correspondents to cover the events on the Syrian land. It, rather, adopted exclusive recordings prepared by opponent amateurs. These recordings contained interviews with the soldiers of FSA. They declared that they were military personnel who dissented from the "corrupt regime"<sup>479</sup> who detained and killed people only because they demanded freedom. They said that they were struggling against oppression and oppressors, and that they were defending their civil brothers. They also confirmed that the regime's forces killed everyone who did not obey the orders requiring them to detain and kill the citizens, and that a lot of their companions who were soldiers in the regime's army were killed because they refused to yield to the brutality of the regime. They used phrases that could inflame the Syrian people against the army in addition to inciting the soldiers to defect. For example, they mentioned that they saw thousands of dead bodies of soldiers murdered by the regime piled in the mortuaries of one hospital. The aim of this message is magnifying the rate of danger around the Syrian soldiers. It is a message which is able to stimulate many regular soldiers to dissent in fear for their life.

A young man from FSA states: "Our goal is protecting our people, our families from Al-Assad's battalions. If we died here, we know that we are martyrs; we died for a cause, for our people as we are defending our people. But if we died while in Al-Assad's battalions, then we would die for the sake of a traitor."<sup>480</sup> This is a message that portrays the FSA men as honorable ones who sacrifice their lives for the sake of the people, which is a significance of altruism. These statements show that these soldiers were between two choices both of which were death; either death in the way of the people or death in the way of Al-Assad, whom the opponent soldier calls 'traitor'. However, the soldiers of FSA chose death in the way of the people because if they died, they would be considered by God as martyrs, and martyrs have important benefits in the Hereafter on basis of the religion of Islam.

In 2012, the structure of the prominent declarations of FSA in interviews changed. After it was self-introducing in 2011, it became a presentation of achievements and gains they achieve such as capturing the regime army's equipment and ammunition, freeing checkpoints and regions, killing Shabbiha and so on. In their interviews, the officers and soldiers explained their field stance like reinforcing their positions, their deployment in cities, their control of the movements of the regular army and so on. They assured that they were working for protecting the citizens. This notion is one of the most important opponent propaganda which continued from 2011 to 2013.

Reassuring people and promising them of victory also were of the most noticeable messages which FSA officers wanted to convey. Mostafa Al-Sheikh the commander of the military council said: "God will, we are all going to celebrate in Damascus. We are going to punish all these

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<sup>479</sup> 25 November 2011. "النظام الفاسد"

<sup>480</sup> 09 January 2012.

"هدفنا حماية شعبنا حماية أهلنا من كتائب الأسدية، نحن وقت نموت هون منعرف حالنا أنه متنا شهداء، متنا من شأن قضية. متنا من أجل شعبنا. عم ندافع عن شعبنا. أما وقت نموت بكتائب الأسد عم نموت كرمال واحد خاين."

murderers under your control. *Inshallah* – God will- very soon the flags of victory will be raised on Qassioun and here in Atareb and shortly in Aleppo."<sup>481</sup> The goal of this message is raising the morale of the opponent Syrian people and giving hope and confidence that victory is very close. This officer either spontaneously or intently used the phrase 'inshallah' which is an indication of believing in the destiny of God. Such phrases can affect the Muslim recipients, especially when the speaker is an officer in the army. These messages can polarize the Muslims to the armed opposition whose officers show their belief in the in God and His destiny. In this declaration, Mostafa Al-Sheikh also assured that the people are to judge and punish the criminals. This is an implicit message which means that FSA does not monopolize victory and that all the categories of the people are to fulfill their desire of revenge and to share the punishment of the strayed ruler and his corrupt supporters.

In 2013, during the interviews, the opposition leaders and soldiers' tone had a sense of firmness and confidence. It is true that Al-Jazeera started to concentrate more on the strengths of the opposition than the weaknesses like lacking the weapons and training. However, these weaknesses did not entirely disappear from the declarations of some soldiers. The armed opposition, sometimes indirectly other times directly, declared the necessity of supporting it with heavy weapons.

Some FSA soldiers said that their optimism got larger every time one of them was martyred. They did not get sad because he died but only because they would miss him. His death was a boon since he was a martyr; that is, his destiny is paradise. These messages provoked racing to get the honor of martyrdom.

The interviews with the opposition soldiers were held either by civilian activists who worked for the opposition centers or by amateur journalists whom Al-Jazeera authorized as correspondents for it to send it exclusive recordings, or by professional journalists whom the Channel sent and whose presence was noticeable in 2013.

Al-Jazeera pointed out the allegiance of the civilians to FSA through interviews with Syrian citizens who expressed the importance of this army and the role it plays in protecting the people and in the victory of the revolution. One of the civilians addressed FSA: "Keep staying here! Even if our houses were destroyed and our children were killed, don't withdraw! One word, no other choice: if the Free Army withdrew, we would be more and more destroyed."<sup>482</sup> This is a message that shows limitless popular confidence in FSA. Even if all civilians died and everything was destroyed, the FSA should stay in that area because it is the only protector.

In 2013, Al-Jazeera's correspondents interviewed the leaders of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS). These leaders talked about the nature of the brigades, operation rooms and the coordination mechanism between them. They talked about their operations against the regular forces. Moreover, through these interviews, they sent defiance messages to the regime. These

<sup>481</sup> 02 August 2012. "إن شاء الله رح نحفل جميعا في دمشق و هالقتلة المجرمين نحاسين كلن و بأيدكن. و إن شاء الله قريباً جداً سترتفع يبارق النصر على قاسيون و هون في الأتارب و في حلب قريباً"

<sup>482</sup> 12 September 2012. "و أنا بدي وصل للجيش الحر كلمة. خليكن هون بيوتنا تدمر، ولادنا تنتقل بس أوعا تتسحبوا، كلمة وحدة مافي غيرها إذا انسحب الجيش الحر نحن تدمرنا أكثر و أكثر."

leaders highlighted the participation of Iran and Hezbollah in the Syrian crisis. They said that Iran and Hezbollah: "Came to train the Shabbiha, to train the people on killing the children and on bombardment"<sup>483</sup> this is a significance of the need of the regime's soldiers to the support of Iran and Hezbollah because they do not have the sufficient combat capabilities to confront the armed opposition. This is also a significance that Iran and Hezbollah are criminals who murder the Syrian people.

The phrases of ISIS leaders were full of criticism and mockery of the regime's adjuvant forces. For instance, instead of saying Hezbollah (in Arabic: The Party of Allah) they used the name Hezbollat (in Arabic: The Party of Lat,) or they called it the Party of the Devil. They employed the name of Lat, which is an old pre-Islamic pagan goddess. ISIS leaders criticized the pro-regime citizens of all categories, civilian and military, and gave them sarcastic names one of which was: "The regime's tails"<sup>484</sup>.

Al-Jazeera recalled recordings which included the statements of the armed opposition where it negated charges directed against it by the regime such as committing massacres, murdering civilians and using the chemical weapon. "FSA issued a statement in which it negated any relation of it to what was said to be fabricated explosions the goal of which is misleading the international supervisors and justifying the fall of the local currency."<sup>485</sup> This is hinting that the regime is the one which plans and executes these explosions in order to charge the armed opposition of it and justify the regime's military actions. The FSA officers refuted their ownership of chemical weapons. They said that even if they had had it, they would utterly have refused to use it in principle. Al-Jazeera repeatedly and concurrently promoted these ideas as messages which implicitly assured that the real chemical weapons user was the regime's army.

The opposition used the network to spread recordings through which it showed the fulfilled or coming military actions such as: "We declare freeing Homs checkpoint"<sup>486</sup>, "We declare the start of the battle Victory from God"<sup>487</sup>. Al-Jazeera popularized such operations through continuous transmission of these recordings and proclamations which it considered them important news sources.

### 3.12 – Geography of Armed Opposition's Activities

Al-Jazeera mentioned, during its coverage of the opposition's military activities, the names of governorates, cities, military positions and important centers in Damascus, Damascus Suburb, Aleppo, Idlib, the bordering areas, the military airports, and so on. These are indications of the

483 09 September 2013. "جاؤوا ليدربوا الشبيحة، جاؤوا ليدربوا الناس على قتل الأطفال، جاؤوا ليدربوا الناس على القصف"

484 02 July 2013. "أذناب النظام"

485 30 April 2012. "أصدر الجيش الحر بياناً نفى فيه أي علاقة له بما قال أنها تفجيرات مقنعة و هدفها تضليل المراقبين الدوليين و تبرير انهيار العملة المحلية"

486 02 February 2012. "نعلن عن تحرير حاجز حمص"

487 08 October 2013. "نعلن عن بدء معركة نصر من الله"

importance of the opposition's achievements on one hand, and of the collapse of the regime's control on the most important cities and positions on the other. This method is an important one in the psychological war. Al-Jazeera rarely mentioned a large number of regions at a time during covering the armed opposition's actions. The Channel used this style more frequently when it covered the regime's actions in order to magnifying the rate of criminality the regime's forces practiced.

### 3.13 – Human Icons

In the studied sample, the channel's highlighting of the armed opposition's leaders and soldiers was restricted to transmitting their recordings which were uploaded on the network or conducting field interviews with them by Al-Jazeera's amateur and professional correspondents. That is, the highlighting was restricted to mentioning their viewpoints on what was taking place and on giving information about military field events. Al-Jazeera did not highlight these characters as individual cases; that is, it did not talk at all about their lives or their heroism. This is a style that suggests the equality of the value of the roles between officers and officers, officers and soldiers, and soldiers and soldiers. Everybody is working for one goal which is ending the regime regardless of the military rank. All are heroes, all are one hand.

### 3.14 – Al-Jazeera Media Personnel's Attitudes Towards the Opposition

"FSA told us", "The soldiers informed us" are phrases that suggest close and strong relation between Al-Jazeera and the armed opposition. The soldiers trust this channel and allow it to accompany them. They give it important details about the recent developments in the battle fields. For example, the journalist says: "From here, we will move with these militants from the distance of 600 m which separates us from the regime forces to get to 200 m away from them, where the first clash lines are, and where the forces of the regime army are positioned near Abbaseen Square. On the way, we will have to be adjacent to them as a mistake could be deadly because the regime's snipers do not hesitate to target any moving object. There is Qassioun Mountain overlooking us clearly."<sup>488</sup> The correspondent was moving side by side with the opponent fighters. His feeling of reassurance with them has an implicit message which means that they are truthful to the people, not criminal gangs as the regime claims. Their task is protecting the people from this regime which shoots whosoever and whatsoever it sees. In the above stated recording, the correspondent assured the necessity of his being close to the opposition militants, which is a significance that the one who follows them is protected and safe. "A mistake could be deadly" is an indication that the journalist should obey the instructions of FSA or the regime would kill him if he was a short distance away

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488 21 September 2013.

"من هنا سننتقل مع هؤلاء المقاتلين من مسافة 600 م فاصلة بيننا وبين الجيش النظامي لتصل إلى 200 متر، هناك خطوط الاشتباك الأولى، حيث تتواجد قوات الجيش النظامي قرب ساحة العباسين. في الطريق يجب محاذاتهم فقد يكون الخطأ قاتلاً إذ أن قناصة النظام لا يتوانون عن استهداف أي شيء متحرك. هذا جبل قاسيون يطل علينا بوضوح".

from the soldiers. These phrases highlight Al-Jazeera's attitude towards the fighting parties: full allegiance towards FSA, absolute hostility towards the regular Syrian army.

(46)



Al-Jazeera's journalist with the opposition soldiers during the battles.<sup>489</sup>

(47)



The female journalist accompanies the opposition armed people. The confidence of the female in the armed people increases the influential capacity of the message.<sup>490</sup>

During the field coverage of the battles, Al-Jazeera correspondents recurrently stated that the clashes were taking place on short distances, which is a signifier that suggests the importance of Al-Jazeera's media coverage. Its journalists and correspondents are exposed to danger and death at any moment. This is a style which creates the feelings of fear, worry and horror in the recipient who is concerned about the Syrian events. The voice tone accompanied with the images puts the narrow distance between the two antagonists forward; death is everywhere, destruction has become the main characteristic of the Syrian cities.

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489 23 June 2013.

490 10 June 2013.

### 3.15 – Additional Remarks about the Images Dealing with the Armed Opposition's Activities

Some of the soldiers' activities were inside houses. There they prepared the weapons (the rifles and the machine guns) while they were talking to Al-Jazeera correspondent. This kind of shots can indirectly show a situation of relaxation and confidence between the journalist and the soldiers. The same thing applies to covering the training sessions and activities of these soldiers on the battlefield. This coverage suggests media adoption of the opposition by the correspondent.

The armed opposition uniform was always dark in color, mainly black. The effect of these colors on the recipient differs in accordance with the alignment of this recipient. If the audience was a supporter of the armed opposition, they would feel that the black is a symbol of power, firmness and self-confidence. But, if the recipient was an opponent of this opposition, they would see the dark colors, especially the black, as a symbol of evil, death and ambiguousness.

(48)



The opposition armed people. The veiled faces on Al-Jazeera's screen are a symbol of revolution and heroism.<sup>491</sup>

Al-Jazeera positively popularized videos uploaded on the network by the armed opposition. The armed soldiers stand in a line in front of the camera, hooded, carrying weapons and cheering: God is the Greatest. Or, they put bands on which 'God is the Greatest' was written round their foreheads. Al-Jazeera highlighted the armed soldiers carrying Al-Qaeda flag, black colored, with the phrase 'There is no God but God' written in white in the middle. The viewers' impression of these scenes differs on basis of their dogmas. That is, if they were supporters of the regime, they would feel that these armed people are murderers, with fearful faces. They would consider them law-breakers who deserve killing because they kill the people. The slogan 'God is the Greatest' would change into a symbol of murder and terrorism in the minds of these viewers. On the contrary, the pro-opposition recipients would see these armed people as heroes working in secret and with accuracy; therefore, they hide their faces. They would consider that they support the religion of Allah, and that God blesses all their steps and actions against the disbelieving regime.

491 09 January 2012.

The images which showed the opponents carrying mechanical guns sitting in cars moving from a place to another were repeatedly presented. The soldiers appeared in other images shooting with rifles and mechanical guns. They fired mortars and seized regime's equipment and centers. They were also shown training and persevering to develop their combat skills.

In addition to media correspondents' coverage, the soldiers themselves were correspondents and film information sources. That is, the soldiers documented their military war actions in full details.

### **3.16 – The Non-Traditional Spoils of Warfare**

Previously, the war spoils were traditional such as weapons and ammunition. Now, due to the communication revolution, especially the availability of the communication techniques everywhere, cell phones have become of the most important booties. The media war may be more important than weapon war. The cell phones contain images, videos, documents and files that can uncover the enemy movements and activities. During the Syrian crisis, the importance of these prizes of war (cell phones and other modern communication techniques) is notably clear. The armed opposition seizes these means and transmits everything it finds of images and data. The same thing applies to the regular Syrian army and the allied forces. They transmit everything they find of data on the cell phones of those who were arrested, died or ran away. This is how the regime forces could prove the participation of extremist Muslims who came from many countries to fight in Syria. Also, this is how the opposition proved that Hezbollah and others were fighting on the side of the regime.

### **The Consequences of the Syrian Crisis as Presented by Al-Jazeera**

Al-Jazeera resorted to magnification and horriffication. The image of Syria on its screen was full of blood, destruction, devastation, fear, horror, and almost complete absence of food and normal life resources. This presentation was always exhibited in an anti-regime context. That is, the Syrian government was the cause of all what happened.

"The human suffering" (7 times), "The sad events" (6 times), "the tragedy", "The human situation is disastrous"<sup>492</sup> (4 times) were terms Al-Jazeera used to briefly express all the consequences of the conflict. The term 'tragedy' was mentioned in contexts which, for example, expressed the degree of the regime's bombardment consequences as well as 'the victims, the injured, the destruction of the infrastructure, and the food and living needs of people'.

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<sup>492</sup> "المعاناة الإنسانية"، "المأساة"، "التراجيديا"، "الوضع الإنساني كارثي".

## 1 – The Killed People

Al-Jazeera gave the names "the murdered" (78 times), and "the victims" (32times)<sup>493</sup> to those who died because of the regime's military actions. Most of them were civilians. The word "murdered" is a neutral term which, in other words, only refers to those who die by another person regardless of the fact whether the murdered is innocent or guilty. However, the word 'victims' has an implicit attitude. It indicates that the civilians or the opposition's dead persons are innocent, assaulted ones who died in an unjust manner. The word 'martyr' was employed once when the demonstrators expressed their compliments to the son of their city, Al-Jazeera's correspondent, the martyr Mohammad Masalmah<sup>494</sup>. This is a significance of the people's respect of the role of the media activists thanks to whom the events were transmitted to the world. Another indication that Al-Jazeera considered its amateur correspondent's death as martyrdom. In other words, the Channel adopted a religious attitude in categorizing the deaths of its correspondents. However, as for the rest of the Syrian death cases, this religious categorization was completely absent.

"The murder scenes remain ahead."<sup>495</sup> The repetition of this statement turned Syria into a stage which contains continuous, uninterrupted scenes that are full of blood. This is a significance of how enormous and horrible the consequences are. "The bloodshed," (4 times), and "Bloodshed goes on"<sup>496</sup> are a metonymy that the death of the civilians by the regime continues. Al-Jazeera employed these phrases when it dealt with the situation of the killed people in general and without mentioning any details about the numbers or the names. This generalization suggests that all the Syrian people are one body which continues bleeding non-stop. Or it puts forward that the numbers of the murdered people are going up.

"Among the body parts and the rubble of destruction one truth, with which all the Syrians agree, shines: the Syrians have a daily appointment with death. Those who escape the bombardment fall as victims of an explosion."<sup>497</sup> This is a significance of the presence of death everywhere; it is always there and unavoidable. It is the inevitable consequence for the armless people. "Cities never stopped burying their murdered persons."<sup>498</sup> This statement was reiterated; it is a significance of the reproduction of death, that death is endless, that the one who takes part in accompanying the dead person's body today might himself be carried to his last home 'grave' tomorrow. "No day passes without the fall of more murdered people."<sup>499</sup> The Channel always directly and explicitly recalled that the numbers of murdered and injured people were enormously increasing day by day.

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493 "القتلى" و "الضحايا"

494 25 January 2013.

Mohammad Masalmah is a Syrian young man from the governorate of Daraa. He was an activist whom the crisis turned into a media person. Then he became a correspondent of Al-Jazeera. He died by the Syrian security forces.

495 25 March 2013. "مشاهد القتل لا تزال ماثلة"

496 25 September 2011, 22 February 2013. "يتواصل نزيف الدم"

497 10 May 2012. "من بين أشلاء القتلة و ركام الدمار تسطع حقيقة واحدة يتفق عليها جميع السوريين و هي أنهم باتوا على موعد يومي مع الموت، من ينجو من القصف يقع ضحية تفجير."

498 14 June 2012. "لم تفرغ المدن من دفن قتلاها"

499 29 June 2012. "لا يكاد يمر يوم دون سقوط مزيد من القتلى"



This information was exposed in a dramatic style in a voice tone which could charge the recipient with so much terror and tension that the Syrians seemed to sleep and wake up every day on new massacres. "They always have an appointment with death"<sup>500</sup>

(49)



A murdered person during the demonstrations against Assad.<sup>501</sup>

Al-Jazeera's discourse suggests that the dead bodies are piled everywhere: in the homes, in the streets, in the fields, cut with knives, thrown in the rivers or in public areas, and amassed in the hospitals. The Channel drew the attention of the recipient to the situation of the corpses. For example, corpses with cut out organs, extracted or crushed genitals, deformed dead bodies, bowels torn to pieces. The dead bodies of the murdered people were pulled from under the rubble; some of them were parts of the body which were cut to pieces. These are signifiers of the abnormal brutality and inhumaneness which characterize the regime, its soldiers and henchmen. "The owners of the homes are motionless corpses under the rubble."<sup>502</sup>, "The dead bodies of hundreds of people, men and women, old and young, were heaped woundless and bloodless in such a way that they looked as if they were sleeping."<sup>503</sup> This indicates that the government forces are using the chemical weapon.

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Dead bodies heaped up in an undistinguishable way.<sup>504</sup>

<sup>500</sup> 10 May 2012. "إنهم دوماً على موعد مع الموت"

<sup>501</sup> 15 May 2011.

<sup>502</sup> 21 January 2013. "أصحاب المنازل جثث هامدة تحت الزكام"

<sup>503</sup> 21 August 2013. "تراكمت جثث المئات من الناس رجالاً و نساءً و أطفالاً بلا جروح و لا نزف حتى بدو و كأنهم نيام"

<sup>504</sup> 07 November 2011.

Al-Jazeera mentioned the difficulty of presenting a lot of images which it had. It stated that these images were horrifying and painful; therefore, it was necessary for it to screen out and obscure some of them so that the viewers may be able to bear the sight of the human death in its ugliest forms.

(51)



Killing children and mutating their dead bodies by the Syrian security personnel.<sup>505</sup>

Women and kids were of the most important means of proving the criminality and brutality of the ruling regime. The Channel portrayed that the armed forces target the women and children so much that they form a large rate of those who were murdered.

Pursuant to Al-Jazeera, the Syrian citizens suffer the loss of their closest relatives: siblings, parents, and so on. "Siblings and friends still fall murdered by the bullets of their supposed protectors."<sup>506</sup> This is a significance of how immense the disaster and the agony are, as death continues to wipe relatives out. Death is leaving the man alone without his family and friends. "This lady comes out from under the rubble of her home, but other members of her family are picked out as motionless dead bodies."<sup>507</sup>

Al-Jazeera tried to attract the emotions of the viewer towards the civilians and the opposition. To achieve this goal, it employed the specific news concerning the murdered and the wounded. "This man, who passed away, was attempting to take out what he could of the belongings of his family. Now, the breadwinner and the belongings had gone away while Douma remained moaning under bombardment like a lot of the other quarters of the city."<sup>508</sup> These statements are loaded with emotional appeal; the man was not a combatant; he was only a civilian who was trying to provide his family by fetching them what he could from their home which they unwillingly had to depart. However, he eventually lost his life as well as the belongings. Then, the Channel likened the city of Douma to a woman who cries, moans and sighs in agony.

<sup>505</sup> 27 May 2011.

<sup>506</sup> 14 October 2011. "إخوة و أصدقاء ما انفكوا يتساقطون قتلا برصاص حمايتهم المفترضين."

<sup>507</sup> 21 March 2013. "تخرج هذه السيدة من تحت أنقاض مسكنها لكن آخرين من عائلتها يخرجون جثث هامة"

<sup>508</sup> 03 July 2012. "كان هذا الرجل الذي فارق الحياة يحاول إخراج ما يمكن إخراجة من متاع أهله. ذهب رب الأسرة و المتاع و بقيت دوما تأن تحت وطأة القصف مثلها كمثل الكثير من الأحياء الأخرى"

Al-Jazeera restated the idea of "blood mingled with bread"<sup>509</sup> (7 times) as a significance the aim of which is not only criticizing the regime's behavior but also stirring the feelings in favor of the civilians who needed the bread which was not abundantly available. They stand in long queues for hours and hours, then the regime cold-bloodedly bombards them. Blood mingled with bread is a signifier of how colossal are the disasters which the people suffer from are.

In one of the videos, a man addresses his little boy who died as a result of the chemical attack: "Wake up, son! Wake up, wake up, son! Yea, wake up, son and say: Oh God!"<sup>510</sup> Then, the journalist comments on this scene: "Did he say: Oh, God? Did he really wake up? Or, query, did he pass away as other hundreds passed away and as the hope of millions of people in this spot of the universe of the possibility of saving them passed away?"<sup>511</sup> This is a literary style which aims to affect the feelings of the recipient. The tone of the journalist expresses a sharp distress, piercing sadness, hopelessness of any international movement which can save the Syrian people. "They encounter a cold sever suffocating inevitable death."<sup>512</sup>

As for mentioning the numbers of the victims, Al-Jazeera adopted a variety of methods. Sometimes, the Channel mentioned the names of one or two victims from the public and concentrated on the details of their funeral processions or the reasons why they were killed. On the one hand, this method makes the murdered persons as media icons who will eventually change into popular symbols. On the other hand, this method is considered as an attempt of pointing out the channel's credibility. The recipient may feel that Al-Jazeera is presenting accurate details about the names, place of residence, relatives of the victims and so on.

In the second method, the Channel wouldn't state names or numbers: "Homs city had funeral processions for its murdered people."<sup>513</sup> This method lets the imagination of the recipient free. Some may imagine that the numbers of the murdered are in hundreds. Others may think that they are in thousands.

In the third method, the Channel stated the number of the murdered within one day or one week in a specific area: "A hundred were murdered yesterday." This method conveys magnification and horrification as one may imagine that a hundred or two fall dead a day.

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509 "امتزاج الخبز بالدم"

510 " قوم بابا قوم، قوم بابا قوم، أي قوم قول يارب"

511 22 August 2013. "هذه البقعة من العالم بإمكانية انقاذهم."

512 22 August 2013. "يصرعون موتاً خائفاً بارداً قاسياً لا انفكاك منه."

513 18 June 2011. "شيعت مدينة حمص قتلاها"

(52)



Dead bodies heaped up in an undistinguishable way.<sup>514</sup>

In the fourth method, Al-Jazeera recalled statistics of the murdered as from the start of the crisis until the date of the report, the statistics of victims who fell within several months: 'tens of thousands', 'hundreds of thousands,' etc.

According to the channel, the civilians are being killed before they break their fast in Ramadan. This picture gives death a more important meaning. It is a significance that those who are killed are pious people, who persevere on the Islamic duties. They fast in Ramadan and perform prayers. While they are getting ready to break the fast – that is, they haven't eaten yet after fasting for a whole day – the regime's forces bombard them. These formulations of the news can inflame all Muslims, especially those who stick to performing all the religious duties.

Al-Jazeera portrayed the Syrian men crying. This presentation is quite important; because, according to the Syrian conventions and traditions, it is not easy for a man to cry. Crying is a womanly attribute of expressing feelings. A man who cries is a weak one and he is likened to women and disparaged. "When the catastrophe is disastrous, men become incapable of holding their tears back."<sup>515</sup> is an implicit message which means that the violence and brutality of the regime are indescribable. Even men who never cry even in the most difficult circumstances and hardships fall crying as a result of what is going on.

(53)



According to Al-Jazeera the crying of men is an evidence of the seriousness of the situation in Syria.<sup>516</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> 07 November 2011.

<sup>515</sup> 12 September 2012. "حين يكون المصاب جلاً لا يتمكن الرجال من حبس دموعهم"

<sup>516</sup> 12 September 2012.

In accordance to Al-Jazeera, insistence on life confronts death; despite all the agonies, the Syrians are coping with their circumstances filled with the hope of victory. The Channel showed images of elders and youngsters raising the signs of victory in spite of the destruction surrounding them from all sides, which is a significance of strong defiance. The Channel pointed out the people's patience and their challenge of the regime's dictatorship through linking the funeral processions to the slogans of the protestors. For instance, in a lot of images, the men reiterate near the cemetery: "God is the Greatest! We kneel only to God."<sup>517</sup> That is, whatever the regime does, it will never succeed in humiliating the people. Kneeling<sup>518</sup> in Islam signifies the obedience of the slave – man – to God, the Greatest, and the Highest. "God is the Greatest! We kneel only to God" is a signifier that the people utterly refuse to bow and accept humiliation from the enemy of God.

The reports involved interviews with people who escaped death or people who lost their relatives. The tones of their voices were full of grief and dismay.

The Channel frequently pointed out the images of the coffins carried on the shoulders of people heading towards the cemetery during the funeral processions. Several times the faces of the dead in the coffins carried on the shoulders were uncovered so that the viewer could see them. Other times these faces were completely shrouded. The same applies to the dead bodies laid on the ground with a lot of men lining opposite them to perform the Prayer For The Dead<sup>519</sup> before burying them. In general, Muslims do not prefer uncovering the face of the dead. So, the whole body is usually covered with the shroud. However, the images which contain corpses with uncovered faces may signify that the deceased passed away smiling or happy and contented; that is, the merciful angels took his soul to the immortal paradise of God. The images which show the faces of the dead tranquil and contented rather than fearful have a significance for Muslims<sup>520</sup>: the happiness and contentedness on the face of the dead show that the dead sees the angels carrying them lovingly and pleasurably. On the contrary, the one who dies afraid of the Death Angel, which is a significance that he is not a pious person, will be tortured by the angels in the grave and eventually go to hell. This will show on their frowning worried face. That is the way the face looks may suggest the destiny of the dead<sup>521</sup>. Therefore, when the demonstrators uncover the faces of the young men, who died during demonstrating or bombarding, and display them as graceful and tranquil faces, not as fearful ones, is an evidence that they are martyrs whom the angels carried tenderly and took them to the vicinity of God and to His Heavens.

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517 22 February 2013. "الله أكبر، لا نركع إلا لله"

518 Bowing – Rukou' – is a prescribed part of the Islamic prayer. The praying person stands up and bows their back with their hands on their knees. This is an indication of man's submissiveness in front the greatness of God.

519 This is a prayer which is served by Muslims before burying the dead. It has no Bowing – Rukou' – or prostrating –Sujud. It consists of four Takbirs i.e. saying the phrase (God is the Greatest). It is performed in order to ask mercy and supplication for the deceased. The purpose of it is also reminding the people alive of their inevitable destiny (Death).

520 There is disagreement among the Muslim scholars concerning the significance of the way the dead person's face looks. Here, we are not discussing the controversy of those scholars. We are rather talking about the prevailing popular dogma among the Muslims in Syria. The researcher has for long years been in contact with different slices of the Syrian people and closely observed these popular dogmas which were taken from religious dogmas.

521 Many Muslims also believe that the situation of the health affects the way the dead person's face looks. However, here we are discussing the religious signifier (which is common among the public). This could not be based on rules and principles adopted by all the Muslim scholars but only by some of them.

(54)



Highlighting the dead person's face during the funeral.<sup>522</sup>

Most of the images of the dead were taken by the cell phone camera. Most of the times. The activists intently resorted to the closely-focused shots of the corpses which were full of the traces of torture and blood. These images seem narrow because they are too close. This creates a case of shortness of breath for the viewer as the details of the tortured body occupy the screen and fill the eye of the viewer with the aspects of death and physiological deformations.

(55)



Killing civilians and mutating their dead bodies by the Syrian security personnel.<sup>523</sup>

## 2 – The Wounded People

Pursuant to Al-Jazeera, there are no normal treatment conditions for the wounded. The regime bombs the hospitals, so they resort to field hospitals which might be in houses or in places far from bombarding. These hospitals had very simple equipment and they were supervised by opponent people. The Channel focused on the over-crowdedness of the rooms with the sick people. The images were painful as the injured seemed in an inhuman condition. They were deprived from their rights of treatment. The way the news of treating the wounded provokes anxiousness, fear and disgust due to the absence of the least degree of human rights.

The images of the injured kids were one of the most important methods of portraying the actual situation of the Syrian crisis and of magnifying the regime's crimes. Al-Jazeera presented images

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<sup>522</sup> 25 September 2011.

<sup>523</sup> 27 May 2011.

of children who were exposed to a chemical attack. One of them was a little girl into whose lungs and head the chemical gas in-leaked. Under hallucination, she discovered that she was alive. In a trembling voice, she started saying: "I'm alive! I'm alive!". A man replied: "Yeah, baby, you're alive"<sup>524</sup>. The repetition of this phrase by the little girl while she was unconscious is a significance that the people strongly hold on to life despite all the sufferings. She wants to make sure that she is still alive; she wants to live.

The images of young men carrying the wounded and trying to save their lives after they were shot by the bullets and the bombing of the regime's forces were repeatedly shown on Al-Jazeera's screen.

The rhythm of the images was fast and short suggesting a situation of confusion and fear in addition to the cohesion and unity of the people; the young men save each other despite all the suppression and killing the regime practices on them.

### 3 – Human and Service Consequences

Discussing the consequences will be presented in two sections: the first, as they were mentioned by the Syrian citizens. The second, as they were mentioned in the news stories and the comments of the journalists.

#### Section One:

During the coverage of the crisis consequences in 2012 and 2013, the correspondents of Al-Jazeera, condensed their meetings with the civilian citizens who talked about their suffering and needs. This method made the consequences seem, most importantly, quoted directly from what the people themselves said, not through a dry news story. The effect of this method is stronger as the people's body language, the tone of their voices and their local dialects all increase the degree of the message's impact.

All the women were wearing *hijab* or *niqab*. All of them were anti-regime. This is a signifier that the Islamic Sunni sect is the greatest enemy of the regime, and an indication that this sect which represents the huge majority in Syria opposes the regime and wants to eradicate it. This implicitly means that the regime is against the popular will and that it represents a religious minority which it protects and for whose safety it is destroying and burning Syria.

The people's interviews expressed all the details of the difficulties of life: communication disconnections, water and power supply cut off; the unavailability of methane gas, diesel, and fuels (when they are available, they are extremely expensive) and the unavailability of heating materials and food stuff. The women said that their children were hungry and that they could not cook. The women's expressions were simple, and the effect of this simplicity on the Arab recipient could be

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<sup>524</sup> 22 August 2013. "أنا عايشة أنا عايشة"، رد عليها رجل: "أي عمو أنت عايشة".

greater as they could convey feelings rather than thoughts. "We use shoes in order to cook and heat ourselves. You can see with your own eyes how we are burning the doors of our rooms. We broke them into pieces so as to burn them under the food pot."<sup>525</sup> This is a significance the hunger and cold fire devours all the items of the citizens: the shoes, the wood of the house doors, the wood of the fruitful trees and so on. That's a portrayal which suggests a human disaster.

(56)



The woman uses door wood for heating and cooking.<sup>526</sup>

The kids line in long queues shouting: "We want diesel! We want diesel!"<sup>527</sup> which signifies how big the people's suffering from cold is<sup>528</sup>.

(57)



Kids wait for their turn to get oil.<sup>529</sup>

The lack of medicines or their expensive prices was one of the most important contents of the interviews. Al-Jazeera pointed out the complaints of the citizens who charged Al-Assad of cutting the medicine off as a punishment for their opposition to him. The Channel showed the people as one hand and one heart; in solidarity they collected the medicine from their homes and donated it

<sup>525</sup> 15 February 2013. "عم نستخدم الأحذية حتى نطبخ و نندفأ، شايئين شوفة عينكن عم نشعل بوب البيت، كسرناهم حتى نحطن تحت الطبخة"

<sup>526</sup> 15 February 2013.

<sup>527</sup> 24 February 2012. "بننا مازوت، بدنا مازوت"

<sup>528</sup> In Syria, diesel is used on a large scale as a means of heating.

<sup>529</sup> 24 February 2012.



to those who needed it among them. In this context, the collaboration and sympathy of the people's categories towards each other against the aggressiveness of the regime also appeared, especially in the absence of the humanitarian aids which, even if they existed, would not suffice to feed a person. The citizens gathered the aids, food and clothes, and distributed them among the needy. According to civilians, not only did the regime forces cut off the supplies but they also robbed the contents of the villages and cities; they stole the people's items and objects.

The women stressed the necessity of the arrival of the humanitarian aids or death would be the destiny of all people. "May God fail you, Bashar! You burned our homes, you burned our food<sup>530</sup>." These phrases were reiterated by a veiled little girl, which is a significance of hunger and homelessness. The tone of her voice suggests that the oppressed<sup>531</sup> is praying to God against the oppressor. The regime's weapons destroyed the children's homes and made them homeless; they remained with no food nor clothes. However, they have big hope in God and He will certainly judge the tyrant oppressor. The sayings and prayers of children have a deep psychological impact on the recipient.

Assuring the savageness and brutality of the soldiers of the regime, the citizens talked about bombarding the fields, the olive presses, the poultry farms, and all resources of income by the airplanes. They also talked about the disastrous consequences of the regime's siege. A veiled old woman said: "May Allah comfort and relieve us! The siege has exhausted and slaughtered us; nothing to eat, nothing to drink. We're looking around for plants to eat."<sup>532</sup> This is an indication that people are now looking everywhere for any kind of grass or plants which a human being does not usually eat to kill their hunger before hunger kills them. A young woman wearing a *hijab* said: "Oh, Arab nation! Oh, Islamic nation! Oh, Bashar Al-Assad! Spray the chemical on us and let us die of hunger collectively and quickly, rather than letting us die of humiliation slowly."<sup>533</sup> These phrases were an objection to the siege by the regime. They indicate that the people prefer dying even by the ugliest weapons – the chemicals – to living a humiliating degrading life. Some men expressed how severe hunger and humiliation were by saying that they shared the livestock their fodder; that is, they ate the animals' fodder.

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530 23 April 2012. "الله لا يوفقك يا بشار، حرقنا بيوتنا حرقنا أكنا."

531 Muslims believe that the prayers of the oppressed against the oppressor have no barrier between them and God; i.e. when the oppressed prays against the oppressor the justice of God will certainly punish this oppressor.

532 29 December 2013. "الله يفرج علينا، الحصار دبحنا دبح، لا أكل ولا شرب عم ندور إذا في نبات مناكلة."

533 29 December 2013. "أمة العرب، الأمة الإسلامية، بشار الأسد رشونا كيماوي وموتونا من الجوع عالسريع جماعي ولا تموتونا عالبطيء بالذل."

(58)



The suffering of animals and poultry because of the siege of the Syrian army.<sup>534</sup>

The citizens expressed that the degree of suffering deteriorated in Ramadan. They said that some men and young men (the gallant) did all they could in order to smuggle some food and give it to the people who suffered from the siege.

Some men and young men said that they were the only people who remained in the town and that their families left to become displaced. They talked about the details of their lives under the siege and the unavailability of food stuff. "Me and a few young men are here managing things. We're the only ones who remained in the quarter. We managed things with some kerosene. We are managing things and cook by ourselves. Nobody remained except me and a few guys."<sup>535</sup> This discourse sentimentally appeals to the Syria people; generally speaking, the Syrian man does not cook; cooking and home management are generally the work of women. Women can understand the suffering of the men who lost their families and became obliged to practice the chores which are usually the specialization of women, especially in the religiously uptight environment. Also, men consider that it is a big tragedy for a man to have to cook.

"All this is because of Bashar"<sup>536</sup>, "Bashar is cutting off medicine from us"<sup>537</sup>, "Bashar deprived us of fertilizers"<sup>538</sup> were phrases reiterated by Syrian men. These are direct charges against the personality of the president. These statements might look normal and simple, but, in fact, they convey important signifiers. Before the Syrian crisis, the Syrian citizen never dared to say the name of the president this way and disparagingly. Nobody used to mention the name of Al-Assad without one of his titles: the president, the leader, the Boss, and so on. When these citizens were interviewed by Al-Jazeera, they had in mind that the Syrian security is able of recognizing them and eventually chasing them. However, they did not care and confronted this president through the media. They mentioned his first name only – Bashar – to express that they disrespect him. Their way suggests that they were confident that Al-Assad was not going to be their president any longer

534 23 March 2012.

535 19 July 2013. "قاعدين عم ندير حالنا أنا و كم شب هون ما صغي غيرنا بالحارة، ديرنا حالنا بشوية زيت كاز و عم نطبخ ل حالنا عم ندير حالنا ماصغي غيري أنا و كم شب"

536 24 October 2012. "هاد كله من بشار"

537 23 March 2012. "بشار عم يقطع الدوا عنا"

538 26 November 2013. "بشار حرمتنا من الأسمدة"

and that the revolution will certainly be victorious. If they had had the least doubt about victory, they would not have appeared on media or defied and disparaged the president.

**Section Two;** News narration and journalists' comments which handled the consequences of the conflict:

Magnification was the most prominent characteristic of the news account. Even the voice tone of the journalists was employed to serve this magnification; it could be slow suggesting stillness, death, devastation, hunger, thirst, fear, and so on; it could be fast suggesting danger to everybody and every place, as if nothing would be safe from bombarding; or it could be medium combining simultaneously between the death of the normal life and danger.

The most noticeable points which the Channel concentrated on in covering the crisis were as follows:

Hunger: Al-Jazeera mentioned that a lot of the regions which were considered food sources for Syria and for the neighboring countries as well suffer from a catastrophic famine. "Long lines waiting for the loaf of bread in a country which has boasted food self-sufficiency for a long time."<sup>539</sup> By this comment the Channel meant to criticize the regime because the Syrian government always showed off that Syria enjoyed self-sufficiency whereas the army is depriving the people the loaf of bread now. According to Al-Jazeera, the starvation policy is more painful for the civilians, especially in winter. The following phrases were repeatedly stated: "Bread was mixed with blood"<sup>540</sup>, "Bread immersed in blood"<sup>541</sup>, "The queues for bread turned into blood queues"<sup>542</sup>, "In Homs, bread has another taste"<sup>543</sup>. Bread is a symbol of life and blood is a symbol of death so that the mental image becomes "mixing life with death". "How big the need of the Syrians for a loaf of bread these days is! The lines get longer and longer in order to win it. However, only in Syria, waiting in front of the bakeries is a risk which costs the people their lives"<sup>544</sup>, this is a sentimental appeal in favor of the civilians in order to criminalize the regime. This method achieves two goals with "one stroke".

It was not enough for Al-Jazeera to talk about the hunger of human beings. It talked about the situation of the animals and birds as well. The birds are also hungry and the livestock suffer from a severe lack of food. "Everybody is suffering the danger of famine, some young civilian activists who remained inside the city, lest they would be arrested, cook food and present it to many militants to break the fast because many of these militants are not good at cooking and this is the first time they are away from their relatives."<sup>545</sup> These statements contain several signifieds: the

<sup>539</sup> 29 December 2012. "طوابير طويلة في انتظار رغيف الخبز في بلد طالما افتخر باكتفائه الذاتي من الغذاء."

<sup>540</sup> 31 October 2012. "امتزج الخبز بالدم."

<sup>541</sup> 12 September 2012, 25 December 2012. "الخبز المغمس بالدم."

<sup>542</sup> 03 December 2012. "تحولت طوابير الخبز إلى طوابير الموت."

<sup>543</sup> 25 December 2012. "في حمص للخبز طعم آخر."

<sup>544</sup> 31 October 2012. "ما أحوج السوريين هذه الأيام إلى رغيف خبز. تطول الطوابير و تطول من أجل الظفر به. لكن في سوريا دون سواها باب الانتظار أمام المخازن مجازفة تكلف الناس حياتهم."

<sup>545</sup> 19 July 2013.

"الكل يعاني خطر المجاعة. بعض الشباب من الناشطين المدنيين و الذين بقوا داخل المدينة خوفاً أن يتم اعتقالهم، يقومون بطهي الطعام و تقديمه لكثير من المقاتلين أثناء وجبة الإفطار، فالكثير من هؤلاء المقاتلين لا يجيدون الطهي و هذه هي المرة الأولى التي يتعدون فيها عن ذوبهم."

solidarity between the armless and armed opponents. The perseverance of the opponents on practicing the Islamic religious prescriptions (fasting) in spite of the siege. In accordance with the Syrian traditions, when a man has to cook, it means that the female is absent from his life and that a change has taken place in his masculine characteristics because, generally speaking, cooking is not an attribute or a task of men. These are women's tasks (a man should devote his abilities to things more important than cooking).

(59)



Because of the difficulty of the situation, men themselves had to cook.<sup>546</sup>

Epidemics: diseases spread among people, especially children. Even some old diseases were back again. The garbage piles were everywhere. The government never cared for the citizens, so some young men from the city cleaned the towns and cities, which is a significance that the Syrian youth bear the responsibility.

The lack or absence of the essential needs of life: the news account called a lot of the people's needs. 'the children lack the least needs of life, especially food and clothes', 'unavailability of water and when available, it is contaminated', 'the people gather the rain water then use it', 'power cut-offs'. Pursuant to Al-Jazeera correspondents, volunteers try to maintain the power system which is intently neglected by the official authorities. This is a significance that the people depend on themselves and the regime has absolutely ignored them. Another thing is the 'Absence of fuels'. Al-Jazeera showed that the farmers who are known for their love of the land are now cutting the trees and using them in heating and cooking. This is an indication of the severe suffering from hunger and cold. It is also a significance of the collapse of the agricultural sector. Al-Jazeera assured that the gardens and forests have become treeless, which is an indication to the immense need. If the fuel were available, it would be for prices that the citizens cannot afford as the purchasing power has enormously deteriorated because the government has raised the prices.

The influence of the siege on agriculture: here is a signifier that the regime is fighting the people through destroying the agricultural crops.

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<sup>546</sup> 19 July 2013.

The collapse of education: many schools were knocked down. Some of them were turned into shelters and others into field hospitals. This is a significance that the generations have been educationally destroyed.

Stopping the medical sector: the hospitals have been knocked down. The medical crews have immigrated or left their jobs fearing the regime's bombing.

Knocking down homes, mosques, hospitals, schools, and so on: on Al- Jazeera's screen, cities looked war-stricken and deserted, with destroyed buildings. The Channel employed expressions which support the effect of the images. For example, "The city is rubble over rubble"<sup>547</sup>, "Destruction is everywhere"<sup>548</sup>, "Grave devastation" (4 times), "Complete quarters are destroyed"<sup>549</sup>. "Despite the destruction and devastation which happened to the most of the mosques, some Syrians did not show laziness in performing prayers in them, even if they did not exceed the number of the fingers of one hand."<sup>550</sup> This is a significance of religious commitment and obeying the divine orders which prescribe prayers on Muslims. This is a new assurance that the regime is the enemy of God, the enemy of Islam.

Stopping tourism and deterioration of economy: unemployment rates have raised. Hundreds of business workshops have stopped. Factories were closed. The Syrian economy has fallen into a coma. The exchange of the Syrian currency has deteriorated. An accelerated erosion of the state's revenues has taken place.

According to Al-Jazeera, the tragedy is unimaginable. A whole generation is under the threat of being lost and psychologically deformed. The kids have been exposed to psychological shocks from the horror of what they saw and heard; their families, neighbors and friends were murdered. Everybody in Syria suffers loss. There is no home where a member of it did not die

The Channel did not mention the riots done by people who made use of the state of instability and who did not politically belong to any category like the thieves and the murderers. The only killer was the regime. The purpose of this news selectivity is drawing the attention to the governmental criminality.

Many times, Al-Jazeera mentioned that the slices of the society are optimistic. Despite the suffering, siege, death and destruction, the hope of the Syrians is still alive. Syria will be better in the future; that is, after disposing of the rule of the present regime.

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547 10 May 2012. "المدينة ركام فوق ركام"

548 12 September 2012. "الدمار في كل مكان"

549 14 January 2013. "دمار هائل"، "أحياء كاملة مدمرة"

550 14 July 2013. "رغم الدمار و الخراب الذي لحق بأغلب المساجد لم يتقاعس بعض السوريين عن إقامة الصلاة فيها و لو بأعداد لا تتجاوز أصابع اليد"

#### **4 – Displacement and Asylum**

Al-Jazeera's coverage of the displaced and refugees varied between statistical presentation and sentimental appeals.

The statistical presentation was in different methods: Firstly, mentioning the number of the refugees and displaced as from the beginning of the crisis to the date of the presented news story. This is a method which reminds the recipient of the increase of the numbers of those who were obliged to leave their country. This method introduces a panoramic statistical image of asylum. Secondly, the coverage of the numbers of the people fleeing certain regions during a specific length of time which could be some weeks or months. Al-Jazeera employed this method when it wanted to magnify events which took place over a specific period of time. For instance, in order to prove the upsurge of the regime's bombing on the city over the period of two months, the Channel introduced numbers which pointed out the displacement of all the civic people from these regions. Thirdly, the Channel used the statistics of one or two days. This method was employed in the context of the events which were more prominent and effective than others; an example of this is when the regime's forces intensively bombed a certain region with all types of weapons over one day. Fourthly, the Channel talked about refugees in general. It did not specify figures or numbers. This method leaves the imagination of the recipient widely free. Fifthly, recalling the numbers of the refugees in every neighboring country. For instance, 465 thousand in Lebanon, 75 thousand in Jordan. Sixthly, the magnification method which is based on mentioning the numbers without direct specification: 'a quarter of Syria's population have become displaced or refugees', 'over a quarter of Syria's population had to leave their homes', 'Millions of the Syrian people can't find a shelter and have become forced to move'.

The studied reports discussed the situation of the refugees inside Syria and in the neighboring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The Channel never mentioned the affairs of the Syrian refugees in the western countries.

Al-Jazeera shed light on the suffering of the internally displaced people and the refugees outside: 'the difficulty of securing subsistence needs', 'the difficulty of finding a shelter inside Syria', 'the Syrians turned the mosques, the schools and even the public parks into displacement centers', 'the citizens run away from death to death' which is, on the one hand, a significance that the regime chases them and bombs them wherever they are. It is, on the other hand, a significance of tragic suffering and inhuman conditions which they have to bear and be patient with. The reports handled the difficulty of securing camps and tents outside the country and the fact that even if they were secured, they would not realize the least human level. They would not protect from heat or cold. The Channel also discussed the problems of raping women and girls and forcing them to be married, the deprivation from education, the lack of food and water and the spread of diseases. "The tears of thousands of the people of Syria are seared by the winter's wind as they are displaced,

homeless, besieged and hungry in torn tents where the wind blows and where handicapped and wounded women and children live under the lowest level of subsistence and health services."<sup>551</sup>

The Channel mentioned that the majority of the displaced and refugees were women and children. This helps to point out how oppressed the Syrian people are, as Arabs are more affected by issues concerning women and children who are considered weak creatures.

(60-61)



Displaced people most of them are women and kids.<sup>552</sup>



The refugee children.<sup>553</sup>

"What do the Syrians possess when their country becomes too small to have them in it and when the circles of bullets, guns, tanks and missiles surround them? What can they do when their homes become within the list of the daily bombardment by the regime's tanks, planes and rocket launchers."<sup>554</sup> According to Al-Jazeera, asylum and displacement often result from the regime's activities such as bombing, besieging and assaults. The Channel seldom considered the armed conflict between the regime and the armed opposition a cause of the displacement of the people. The Channel never mentioned other causes such as the presence of armed gangs which did not

551 15 November 2013.

"دموع الالاف من أهالي سوريا يلفحها هواء الشتاء فهم بين نزوح و تشرد و حصار و جوع في خيم ممزقة قد تتلاعب بها الريح. يعيش معاقون و جرحى نساء و أطفال دون أدنى مستوى من الخدمات الصحية و المعيشية".

552 15 May 2011.

553 13 June 2011.

554 03 September 2013.

"ماذا يملك السوري إذا ضاقت به بلاده و طوقته دوائر الرصاص و المدافع و الدبابات و الصواريخ، و كيف يفعل ذلك إذا كان مسكنة الوحيد واقعا ضمن قائمة القصف اليومي لدى دبابات النظام و طائراته و راجمات صواريخه".

belong to any trend. These gangs which made use of the situation of instability in order to rob, murder and seize the property of the people. People escaped for fear of the regime's injustice on them, and in search for security and food which were no more available in Syria because of the siege.

"Not many of the city population remained. Most of them left without luggage. Some of them might have taken out what they could from under the rubble."<sup>555</sup> This is a significance of the loss of the people of everything; the people were forced to move leaving their homes. They were not even able to take anything of their belongings because everything was destroyed; everything was under the rubble of devastation. "The Syrian escapes a type of death to face another away from a destroyed home, a family who were absented by death and comrades who dispersed over the borders of the homeland"<sup>556</sup> This is a signifier of the immense suffering of the Syrian citizen, first because of the regime's violence, and secondly because of the difficulties of the asylum and its tragic conditions. All this was mingled with a psychological situation full of sadness and sorrow because the homes were destroyed, the family and relatives died, and the friends departed and were dispersed with no hope to meet them and share sorrow with them.

Al-Jazeera stated that the escape of the refugees from death does not mean that they would live a decent life; suffering surrounds them everywhere. In addition, the numbers of the deserters are continuously increasing. This flow is going to make their situation worse because the neighboring Arab countries such as Jordan and Lebanon do not have sufficient capacity to absorb more and more Syrians.

(62)



The refugee women and the children in the camps.<sup>557</sup>

During the coverage of the subject of the refugees, the Channel portrayed the Syrian people as cooperative, supportive and loyal to each other. The citizens welcome the emigrants who come from other governorates and towns, serve food, present clothes to them and share their homes with them. "Even old clothes which protect them from the cold of winter at a time when there is no heating except through the regime's fires."<sup>558</sup> This is an indication that the people help each other even through donating old things. Another signifier is how greatly the people suffer from the cold

<sup>555</sup> 18 September 2012. "لم يتبق كثير من أهالي المدينة، رحل معظمهم بلا متاع أو ربما أخذوا بعض ما استطاعوا إخراجهم من تحت الأنقاض"

<sup>556</sup> 15 November 2013. "يفر السوري من الموت فيلأقيه موت من نوع آخر. بعيدا عن بيت مهدم و أهل غيبتهم الموت و رفاق تفرقوا على حدود الوطن"

<sup>557</sup> 06 June 2012.

<sup>558</sup> 29 December 2012. "حتى لو البسة قديمة تقويم برد الشتاء في وقت لا تنفخ فيه إلا عبر نيران النظام"



as there is no means of heating, while the only source of heating is the fires of the forces of the Syrian army. This is a depiction that proves the degree of the horrific suffering of the Syrian people. "This woman spent the whole night waiting for her turn to buy bread for her children and for those emigrants whom she calls guests."<sup>559</sup> This is a significance, on the one hand, of the difficulty of securing a living, and of the collaboration of the citizens, on the other. "This crowdedness is not because life is normal. It is rather because Al-Raqqa holds more than a million and three hundred thousand displaced people from all the Syrian governorates in it. This is not a demonstration; it is rather queues of thousands waiting at the doors of the bakeries."<sup>560</sup>

Al-Jazeera selected images where the children and women line in front of the camera looking in a way which suggests the misery they are suffering from. The images of the asylum and displacement kids pointed out their dirty clothes, their uncombed dust-stuffed hair and their crying of severe grief and hunger.

(63)



The women and children refugees. The women are wearing the Sunni hijab.<sup>561</sup>

Al-Jazeera drew the attention to the effect of the climatic difficulties on the situation of the emigrants inside Syria and the refugees outside it. In this context, the Channel criticized the Arab and international countries which remained motionless although they can see in the images the enormous degree of humiliation to which the displaced Syrians are exposed. Al-Jazeera also presented the attitudes of the Syrian people who were disgusted by the Arab and international countries.

<sup>559</sup> 15 February 2013. "هذه المرأة باتت ليئتها بانتظار دورها لشراء الخبز لأطفالها و لمن تسميهم الضيوف من النازحين"

<sup>560</sup> 15 February 2013. "الزحام هنا ليس لأن الحياة طبيعية بل لأن الرقة تحتضن أكثر من مليون و 300 ألف نازح من كافة المحافظات السورية. ليست مظاهرة بل طوابير للآلاف على أبواب المخازن"

<sup>561</sup> 13 June 2011.

(64)

The suffering of the women refugees.<sup>562</sup>

The desire of the Syrians to get back to their cities as soon as possible in addition to their insistence and defying Al-Assad's tyranny were very clear. This defiance has greater impact when expressed by young men and young children who, for example, cheer: "Bye, bye, Bashar! Good night!"<sup>563</sup> which is an indication that the time of the president is over, and that a new dawn is soon to come out. In this example, we see how children have used a phrase whose literal meaning is positive "i.e. Good night", but the literal meaning has changed into negative because the addressee is Assad. Wishing good night has become a significance of the end of the reign of the president because his night has come and night is a symbol of slumber and motionlessness.

### Covering the Situation of Minorities in Syria

The Channel's mentioning of the situation of the ethnic and religious minorities was quite rare. Therefore, the popular movement seemed as one which represented the religious majority, i.e. the Sunni sect<sup>564</sup>.

Three minorities were mentioned: the Palestinians, the Christians and the Kurds. As for the Palestinians, Al-Jazeera portrayed this minority as one which is very opponent of the regime. It added that the forces of the Arab Syrian army detain, kill and besiege the Palestinians and apply the starvation policy on them. This picture is very important as the regime always tried to present itself as a hero who defended the Palestinian cause, protected the Palestinians in Syria, and granted them rights which were equal to those of the Syrian citizens. The channels which support the Syrian government conveyed the Palestinian points of view which supported the policies of Al-Assad and the regime. However, Al-Jazeera launched a counter attack to deracinate these ideas. It portrayed the regime as a traitor and an agent of Israel. 'Al-Assad is the only one who is able to control the borders with Israel' i.e. he is protecting Israel from the Arab people's fury and anger as the Syrians and Palestinians want to go into occupied Palestine in order to retrieve it after they expel the Israelis from it. That is, the people want to free Palestine while Al-Assad is preventing them to do that. According to Al-Jazeera, the regime uses the Palestinians as a trump card, in which

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<sup>562</sup> 13 June 2011.

<sup>563</sup> 01 April 2012. "ياي ياى يا بشار، تصيح على خير"

<sup>564</sup> The details about this point can be found in several previous paragraphs of the semiotic Analysis of Al-Jazeera reports.

he deals to take popular roots. The Channel tended to mobilize the Palestinian people against Al-Assad and his government through historical recalls which point out the enmity and fight between Yasser Arafat and Al-Assads.

Al-Jazeera specified only one report in which it talked about the Christian minority. In addition, it incidentally talked about the Armenians, Syriac and Chaldeans. The purpose of the report<sup>565</sup> was showing the regime's hostility towards these minorities. The regime's military policy forced them to move and leave their areas. Al-Jazeera's correspondent interviewed a Christian citizen who assured that the different sects have for a long time been co-existing together and that they have been sharing each other their joy and sadness. The implicit purpose of this message is discrediting the regime's propaganda about the sectarianism of the opposition and its crimes against the minorities on a sectarian and doctrine basis.

The Channel pointed out the division of the Kurdish stance towards the Syrian crisis. On Syrian land, the she-correspondent of Al-Jazeera said: "At the firing line, stands a Kurdish young man with his rifle directed towards the sons of his minority which was divided into supporters of the regime and others who supported the Syrian revolution."<sup>566</sup> This is a significance of the disastrous consequences to which the policy of the ruling regime has led. Because Al-Assad did not step down, the brothers started killing each other as their attitudes were divided between supporters and opponents of the Syrian government. "The Kurds who joined FSA state that the regime played on sectarian chord so that the brothers separated between supporters and opponents of the Syrian revolution."<sup>567</sup> This is an indication that the regime makes use of tearing the constituents of the people and of widening the cracks between the same sect or ethnicity, i.e. the regime applies the 'divide and conquer' policy.

Al-Jazeera presented the Kurdish fighters as heroes who are loyal to Syria. They joined their Arab brothers to fight under the flag of FSA. Abu Muhammad, the media spokesman of the Kurdish Revolutionary Council, addressed Al-Jazeera's correspondent on the battlefield: "We work for the unity of Syria only. We want to prove that the Kurds are patriotic. They are not less patriotic than any other component of the Syrian people."<sup>568</sup> The Channel showed images of the Kurds carrying their guns countering the regime's forces and the Kurds who martially support these forces. A Kurdish militant states: "I have decided to stand to the side of our brothers, the Arabs, in the Syrian revolution because we made sure that they were right, but some Kurds betrayed this."<sup>569</sup> This is a significance that the pro-regime Kurds support oppression, support the one who assaults the right of the people. This message is, also, an invitation to all the Kurds to join the opponents because those who support the regime are traitors and treacherous. This notion is

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565 26 March 2013.

566 10 June 2013. "شاب كردي يقف على خط النار، يصوب بندقيته باتجاه أبناء أقليته التي انقسمت بين موالين للنظام و آخرين مع الثورة السورية".

567 10 June 2013. "يقول الأكراد الذين انخرطوا في صفوف الجيش السوري الحر بأن النظام قد لعب على وتر الطائفية ففرق الأخوة ما بين مؤيد للثورة السورية و معترض عليها".

568 10 June 2013. "نحن منعمل فقط من أجل وحدة سوريا، و لنثبت أن الأكراد وطنيون و لا يقتلون وطنية عن أي مكون آخر من الشعب السوري".

569 10 June 2013. "قررت أوقف بجانب أخواننا العرب في الثورة السورية، لأنه تأكدنا أنه هنن على حق و بعض من الأكراد خانوا هالشي".

assured by a declaration by a Kurdish official though which he expresses the betrayal of some Kurds who promised to fight the regime and participate in besieging it. On the contrary, they took the side of Syrian army. They assaulted and murdered the citizens, even the Kurds<sup>570</sup>. In order to polarize the pro-regime Kurds, Al-Jazeera indicated that the aim of the anti-regime Kurdish combatants is not murdering their brothers, Kurds or Arabs; it is rather facing the regime's repression.

### **The Effect of Censorship on the News Coverage; How Was This Subject Addressed in Al-Jazeera's Reports?**

In 2011, Al-Jazeera handled the effect of the control imposed on the media by the Syrian government on the news coverage. "Until now, there are no images of the tanks in the streets of Banyas or any other Syrian city, which is a lack of the news components. This is, of course, explained by the forcible absention of the mass media<sup>571</sup>", "but the news story remained lacking or rather absent as far as most of its headlines and details are concerned. This is due to closing the doors of the country in the face of the mass media and to the inability of any person to get well-founded news from Daraa."<sup>572</sup>The purposes of addressing this subject are: first, justifying the field absence of Al-Jazeera, justifying the inability of the Channel to cover the events on the Syrian land; second, magnifying the suffering of the Syrian people. The Syrians appear to be imprisoned, unable to convey their voice and the images of their agony to the world.

"The media blackout", "The blackout imposed by the authorities." (7 times) This term was repeated many times. It has an implicit indication that suggests the fear of the regime of uncovering its crimes towards the armless citizens by the world. Simultaneously, it suggests the blackout the people live in. This blackout surrounds them everywhere and the regime, the beast, devours this people with no one whosoever seeing or hearing how this devouring is done.

Al-Jazeera pointed out the importance of the modern means of communication in breaking the chains of control. With the communication revolution, the pro-regime media cannot disparage the people's minds and ignore the repression imposed on the revolutionaries. The modern means of communication and changing the ordinary citizen into an immediate correspondent who directly transmits what is taking place on land obliged the regime to declare some reformations and to expel a group of the corrupt officers and officials. Pursuant to Al-Jazeera, the images are portraying what is going on non-stop. The citizen has become a documenter of events, depicting the bomb falling next to him, photographing the soldiers who assault, murder and bomb. "From a remote place, the cell phone camera depicts the security forces who tried to extinguish the protests by

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570 10 June 2013.

571 11 April 2011. "ليس ثمة صور إلى الآن للدبابات في شوارع مدينة باتيلاس، أو سواها في المدن السورية. وذلك نقص عن عناصر الخبر يفسره بالطبع تخريب وسائل الإعلام قسراً".

572 27 April 2011. "لكن القصة الإخبارية ظلت مع ذلك ناقصة بل غائبة في معظم عناوينها و تفاصيلها بفعل إغلاق أبواب البلاد أمام وسائل الإعلام و عجز أي كان عن أن يأتي من درعا بخبر يقين".

force."<sup>573</sup> This is a significance suggesting that the citizen takes the images stealthily lest the security forces should discover and arrest him. "A lens of an activist escaped an artillery bombing which was too close to it."<sup>574</sup> We notice that the Channel did not state that one of the activists escaped because his escape as a human being was not the most important event for this news coverage. The purpose was drawing the attention of the viewer to the importance of the role of the modern media; as the mobile phone cameras are the most significant witness of the regime's crimes.

The cell phone cameras were the main source of Al-Jazeera's news. This led some channels to criticize the mechanism of Al-Jazeera which adopted videos the credibility of which cannot be verified. Al-Jazeera replied to these criticisms indirectly: "With preventing the mass media and the regional and international rights organizations from accessing Daraa and verify the witnesses' accounts or the government's denial, the image remains the only one which can be seen by the world. After that, it's up to the viewer to believe it or doubt and deny it."<sup>575</sup> What is meant by the image which can be seen by the world the videos of opponents who use cell phone cameras to cover the daily events. Through these phrases Al-Jazeera tried, in a disgusted tone, to justify the use of these videos. It tried to say 'What to do?'. What can we do if the regime does not allow us to cover the events and does not allow anyone to access the conflict regions? Only the image depicted by the mobile phone can convey what is taking place on field. If you want, believe it or discredit it; this is the only source we have.

### **Additional Signifiers of the Type and Rhythm of the Media Personnel's voice**

The voice rhythm of Al-Jazeera's personnel varied among the fast, the medium and the slow. The rhythm differed in accordance to the subject dealt with. When the Channel covered the opposing popular movement which spread all over Syria, the rhythm was fast suggesting that these demonstrations were like wildfire that cannot be extinguished. This method can be useful in the psychological war. On the one hand, it makes the regime's soldiers feel that the strength of the opposition is growing day by day and that it has become impossible to think of eradicating it. On the other hand, this method gives the demonstrators doses of confidence, encouragement and urging on perseverance.

The medium voice rhythm was employed during the coverage of the popular movement to suggest the steadiness of the demonstration pace. As if this activity had been a daily activity that

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<sup>573</sup> 23 March 2011. "عن بعد، ترصد كاميرا هاتف النقال قوات الأمن و التي حاولت بالقوة إخماد احتجاجات".

<sup>574</sup> 18 June 2013. "نجت عنسة أحد الناشطين من قصف مدفعي كان قريبا جدا منها".

<sup>575</sup> 17 May 2011.

" في ظل منع وسائل الإعلام و المنظمات الحقوقية الإقليمية و الدولية من الدخول إلى درعا و التحقق من روايات الشهود أو النفي الحكومي تظل الصورة وحدها من يطل على العالم فإن شاء صدق و إن شاء شك و نفي".

would stop only when the regime had fallen and Al-Assad had departed. Al-Jazeera never employed the slow voice rhythm during the demonstrations' coverage.

The fast voice rhythm adopted during presenting information about the regime and its activities suggests that the bullets, missiles and bombs fall cats and dogs. This rhythm transmits fear and horror. It makes the viewer hold breathing, sigh with anxiety, and feel unstable. The Syrian viewers might feel that the regime's forces could assault their house at any moment and that the bombs could soon fall on them.

The medium voice rhythm suggests that the Syrian, Arab and world peoples got used to the assaults of the regime's forces as they have become daily activities which the regime never stops doing. It also suggests the only solution the Syrian government resorts to in order to solve the Syrian crisis is assaults and bombardment. The medium rhythm creates a fixed image of the regime in the mind of the recipient and presents this image as an absolute reality. When the spectators see and hear negative information about the regime at a medium – average – rhythm every day, this method may make them think that this information seems as if it were undeniable absolute truth. Al-Jazeera's journalists never employed the slow tone rhythm when covering the regime's forces actions.

The slow rhythm of the voice was apparently clear during covering the crisis consequences. That is, when handling the topics of asylum, emigration, devastation, death, suffering and people's human needs. This approach suggests the stillness of life, tranquility and the smell of blood. It also suggests the death of activities, and of areas whose inhabitants deserted them, especially when this rhythm is accompanied by images of the destroyed houses, cemeteries and corpses.

During the narrative account, feminine voices could be more effective than masculine ones, especially when the she-journalist talks with a voice tone that suggests her sympathizing with the people and indignation of the regime's repressive policy. During covering the consequences of the crisis, the feminine voice tone charges the recipient with additional emotions to the benefit of the Syrian people. The topic itself can charge the spectator with sentiment; however, the womanly tone remains the symbol of tenderness, uprising against repression, soft defiance and angry femininity. The difference between the manly and womanly voices loads the media message with additional and different contents and significances.

## The Index for Chapter 6

## Al-Jazeera's Random Sample

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## Chapter 7

### **Semiotic Analysis of Al-Manar Channel's Sample**

The verbal and non-verbal signifiers have been extracted and classified in accordance with their topics. The first step is classifying the signifiers in the areas of the following main topics: the demonstrations supporting and opposing Al-Assad and the government, the image of president Assad as it has been presented by Al-Manar, the image of the government security and military forces, the image of the armed opposition, the conflict outcomes, and the image of ethnics and sects that have been highlighted by media. Next, the main topics have been divided into sub-topics. For instance, all the signifiers which deal with the pro-Assad processions (as a main topic) have been extracted, then they were pigeonholed into sub-topics such as the purpose of demonstrating, the slogans, the numbers of demonstrators, the places, and the Interviews with the demonstrators, taking into consideration the significances of age, gender, clothes and other signs.

The classification can be also considered as one of the research results because each sub-heading in the semiotic analysis represents an outcome that contains signifiers which tackle one topic. The interrelation between the two levels of significance, the denotative and connotative, has been taken into consideration. First, the analysis depends on general description where the signifiers are put into their general contexts, then they are studied one by one. Each signifier requires independent explanation; therefore, I have not put them in tabulated groups. I have, rather, put them in a descriptive-analytical frame to facilitate explanation and understanding. The value of some signifiers is connected to the historical context which they evoke, others need analyzing the linguistic structure, while some others derive their value from their relation to religious or customary values predominant in the recipient's environment. I consider the contexts, in which some signs are put, signifiers in themselves. These contexts are essential to uncover the mechanisms of spreading propaganda and those of psychological war and manipulating the recipient. Therefore, it is necessary to study the contexts of mentioning the sources, those of sentimental enticements, those of historical recalls, those of employing the characteristics of Arabic language, those of adopting images, and those of spotlighting and obfuscating. The significances of contexts and meanings of signs help us recognize the identity of the targeted recipient of messages. Analyzing the significances of media personnel's voice tone is considered a part of the semiotic analysis of this study, too.

## How Did Al-Manar Portray the Anti-Regime Popular Movement?

On Al-Manar's screen, Syria seemed free of any peaceful anti-government popular movement. What is going on is a conspiracy whose financiers provide money to some lawbreakers or some citizens who accept to demonstrate for a bit of money. That is to say, their demonstrations are only a consequence of their need for money. It is by no means a true popular revolution against corruption and dictatorship.

Al-Manar recalled news from western press which talks about fabricated reports which are uploaded on You Tube. They contain demonstrations in Syria, Iran and other regions. For example, an article appeared in the *Independent* under the title '*Don't Believe*' where the writer states that once he was in the streets of Tehran, when the media transmitted reports of sudden demonstrations which he saw nothing of. He also said: "counterfeiting and remaking the videos took and is still taking place in many countries, especially Syria."<sup>576</sup>

Not only did Al-Manar absent the popular movement but also denied it directly and totally. "The press is talking about the fabricated disinformation and this is confirmed by testimonies of the citizens who have recently come back from Turkey."<sup>577</sup> Denial seemed as a defensive means in the psychological war fought by the channel; Al-Manar does the role of the defender of the Syrian government through repudiating the existence of any movement against it. Depending on foreign sources indicates the desire of Al-Manar to prove the credibility of its refuting policy through presenting excerpts of western newspapers which belong to countries known to oppose the president Assad's policies.

In the studied sample only one piece of news suggested the existence of a popular movement that asks for some reformations. Even this was a declaration given by Ahmet Davutoglu, the Turkish foreign minister. That is, it was not a direct discourse where Al-Manar recognizes the existence of a popular revolution. Davutoglu's declaration stated "Syria has no choice but to do reforms. There is no other choice, and our Syrian brothers should start to do more reforms, put an end to tension, allow peaceful demonstrating, and commencing a national dialogue in order to solve all the problems. The Syrian People's demands must be respected and no violence must be exercised against them."<sup>578</sup> In appearance the purpose of this piece of news seems a recognition of the existence of a legal right on the side of the people, but implicitly the target of this recalling is assuring that overthrowing the regime is by no means the solution of the Syrian crisis; that is to say, the outcome of the popular Syrian movement can never be like that witnessed by Tunisia,

"إن تزييف وإعادة تصنيع الأشرطة جرى و يجري في بلدان عدة لا سيما في سوريا". 576 27 June 2011.

I cite in the footnotes the reports' dates only; more details about the reports are in the index that exists at the end of this chapter.

"تحدثت الصحف الأجنبية عن التضليل الإعلامي المفتعل، يتلاقى هذا مع شهادات المواطنين الذين عادوا حديثاً من تركيا". 577 27 June 2011.

578 03 July 2011.

"لا خيار لدى سورية سوى القيام بالإصلاحات، لا يوجد أي خيار آخر، و لا بد أن يقوم إخواننا السوريون باتخاذ خطوات لمزيد من الإصلاحات، و وضع حد للتوتر، و السماح بالتظاهرات السلمية، و عقد حوار وطني قومي لحسم كافة المشاكل، و لا بد من احترام مطالب الشعب السوري و لا يجب أن يكون هناك عنف ضدهم".



Egypt and Libya during the Arab Spring (overthrowing the regimes). Rather, the solution of the Syrian crisis lies in meeting the people's wishes of reform. Davutoglu used the term "our Syrian brothers" referring to the Syrian authorities. Those days the Syrian-Turkish relationships were so strong that Davutoglu described them as brotherly bonded (one family). Recalling this expression by Al-Manar reflects its desire to emphasize the legality of the Syrian government in the eyes of Turkey.

By the end of 2012, some terms were employed: 'opponent demonstrations' and 'anti-regime demonstrators'. However, these were mentioned in the context of the civil opponents' protests against the activities of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the opponent of the regime. In plain English, the opposition is demonstrating against itself. These terms were literally taken from AFP; i.e., they were not those of Al-Manar. We notice that Al-Manar made few concessions using terms which it would rather not use in order to report news that may boost the morale of the pro-government people through depicting the opposition as a disjointed and belligerent one; the peaceful opponents are rebelling against the armed ones. "The Agency stated that the opponent demonstrators 'against the regime' have asked for 'the purgation of the FSA' and 'the revolution' in the first so clear criticisms on the part of demonstrators against the FSA, which fights against the regime and which is accused of violations against civilians."<sup>579</sup> I suppose that the literal meaning of the phrase "the anti-Syrian regime demonstrators" changes in the mind of the recipient due to the context to become "the unarmed opposition". This is because the mind of the recipient is in this case directed to the idea rather than the literal meaning. This may uncover another means of manipulating the mind conception of the meanings of the verbal signifiers.

The slogans of the civilian opposition against the armed opposition were: "FSA is a thief."<sup>580</sup> "The people want to reform FSA."<sup>581</sup> "The people want to evict the armed men."<sup>582</sup> Indications of the immorality of the armed opposition and of the people's rejection of the practices of this opposition.

The channel showed that there was a popular resentment against Jabhat Al-Nusra which assaulted the religious symbols and allowed the strangers to interfere in the affairs of the Syrian. Its members also assaulted the Syrians even if they were opponents of the regime<sup>583</sup>. Here, Al-Manar has admitted the existence of opponents of the regime; it gave up the complete denial in order to present an image of a weak, disunited opposition which is incapable of gaining victory.

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579 30 November 2012.

"وقالت الوكالة أن المتظاهرين المعارضين للنظام السوري طالبوا بتطهير الجيش الحر و"الثورة" في أول انتقادات بهذا الوضوح من متظاهرين للجيش الحر الذي يقاتل ضد النظام ويؤخذ عليه انتهاكات ضد المدنيين".

580 30 November 2012. "الجيش الحر حرامي"

581 30 November 2012. "الشعب يريد إصلاح الجيش الحر"

582 16 December 2012. "الشعب يريد طرد المسلحين"

583 11 February 2013.

## How did Al-Manar Cover the Pro-Regime Popular Movement?

### 1. Factional and Geographic Comprehensiveness

Al-Manar notably tried to reassure the loyalty of the different slices of the Syrian People to the Syrian government under the leadership of the president Bashar Al-Assad. To attain this goal, the channel adopted and reiterated a variety of expressions: "popular demonstrations"<sup>584</sup> which is a significance that the pro-regime movement represents the opinion of the majority of the Syrian society. "Syria wraps around Al-Assad"<sup>585</sup>, the word Syria is feminine in Arabic. The channel likened Syria to a woman who incubates and supports the policy of the president. This is a significance of love between the people and the president. Here, the word Syria also signifies the united opinion of the Syrian people; all the people approach the axis – the president – and get attracted to it.

To emphasize the popularity of Assad and his government, Al-Manar adopted metaphors which reflect the positive side of nature; that which is full of fertility and optimism such as "spectrum" and "flow". "Processions which included all the spectrums of the Syrian society."<sup>586</sup> The word "spectrums" in this example attempts to draw an optimistic, colorful and brilliant side of the situation in Syria. "The citizens from all the slices of the society flowed into the squares and the streets leading to these squares in Damascus and the other governorates."<sup>587</sup> In this quotation, the Syrians seem like the flowing river which reflects the fertility and beauty of nature and the squares and streets look like the banks. The frame of optimism is another means which Al-Manar adopted in the context of its defensive policy of the Syrian government.

The extensive and wide popular support of the government and the president was the most prominent pillar of the regime's propaganda which Al-Manar reported and promoted.

Al-Manar portrayed that the processions prevail all over the Syrian governorates and cities without exception. This makes of every region, city and governorate an icon that carries various significances. For example, some of them suggest the loyalty of the religious majority (the Sunni sect) to the regime like Aleppo and Hama, some signify the loyalty of the Druze sect like Suwaida and Jaramana, and others signify the loyalty of the Bedouin clans like Deir Ezzor and Raqqa.

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584 29 March 2011. "مظاهرات شعبية"

585 15 November 2011. "سوريا تلتف حول الأسد"

586 29 March 2011. "مسيرات شملت أطراف المجتمع السوري"

587 29 March 2011. "تدفق المواطنون في دمشق والمحافظات من جميع شرائح المجتمع إلى الساحات الكبيرة والشوارع الممتدة لها"

(1)



Emphasizing the popularity of president Assad through presenting pictures full of his supporters<sup>588</sup>.

## 2. The Number of Demonstrators

Many times, Al-Manar did not mention definite numbers and figures of the demonstrators. It rather used some phrases to express the magnitude of the popular support of the government: "crowded demonstrations"<sup>589</sup> (4 times), "mass Mobilization"<sup>590</sup>, "large processions"<sup>591</sup>, "enormous crowds"<sup>592</sup> (5 times), "popular processions"<sup>593</sup>. This method gives the recipient the freedom to imagine the number. Frequently, these phrases are accompanied by images full of enthusiastic supporters during the processions. This helps reinforce the mental image which shows the enormousness of the popular support and loyalty to the regime.

"Immense crowds flowed"<sup>594</sup>, Al-Manar likened the pro-government processions to the flood or the river that flows, which is a significance of the profuseness of the demonstrators on the one hand and of their strong enthusiasm and desire to confront all those who antagonize their government and leader on the other hand.

588 21 June 2011.

589 "تظاهرات حاشدة"

590 30 October 2011. "الحشد الجماهيري"

591 03 July 2011. "مسيرات كبيرة"

592 "حشود غفيرة"

593 29 March 2011. "مسيرات شعبية"

594 15 June 2011. "اندفعت حشود غفيرة"

(2)



The enthusiasm of Assad supporters and their large numbers.<sup>595</sup>

"Millions of demonstrators" (6 times), this term was used to express pro-regime processions which took place everywhere in Syria or in many governorates. "Tens or hundreds of thousands" (4 times), these figures were employed to express the numbers of the participants in a procession which took place in one place like Damascus the capital, Deir Ezzor, or Homs as it is illogical to allegedly claim that a million demonstrated in a city whose population does not exceed thousands.

### 3. The Purpose of Demonstrating

On Al-Manar's screen, the purpose of demonstrations was not to demand anything. This gives an impression that the people were satisfied and that they did not object to the ruling regime's policies.

The channel reiterated a variety of the demonstrating purposes: "the people flowed expressing faithfulness to their homeland and their refusal of any attempt to incite discord which targets the pattern of coexistence among the citizens of the one united homeland."<sup>596</sup> Al-Manar did not use the phrase: faithfulness to the regime or to the government. It rather employed the term: "faithfulness to homeland". This dyes the pro-regime popular movement with a national color and raises the aims from being for defending the government institutions to become for defending the state's prestige, defending the homeland.

Refusing the attempts of transmitting chaos (*fitna*) by the Syrians means the popular refusal of any opposing movement because this will lead to weakening the national unity and arousing hatred on sectarian and doctrinal grounds. It is noticed that Al-Manar aroused the fears against sectarian

<sup>595</sup> 30 October 2011

<sup>596</sup> 29 March 2011. "تندفعُ المواطنون معبرين عن الوفاء لوطنهم ورفض محاولات بث الفتنة التي تستهدف نموذج العيش المشترك بين أبناء الوطن الواحد".

and factional *fitna* as from the first days of the crisis. This suggests that the Syrian community lives in religious security and peace under the ruling regime and that the opposing movement is based on expiatory (*takfiri*) grounds and aims at growing hatred among the citizens "This procession is held in the context of answering attempts that aim to strike the stability and co-existential harmony."<sup>597</sup> In plain English, a secret beneficiary is making use of the situation of destabilization in Syria and the people reject any attempt that targets security and stability under revolutionary labels such as the Arab Spring, the Syrian Revolution, the Arab Awakening and others.

"Backing or supporting the reform process." "Backing, supporting the reform program." (13 times)<sup>598</sup>. This purpose was densely reiterated always followed by the phrase "under the leadership of President Al-Assad." This is an implicit message that the solution of the Syrian crisis can never be through Al-Assad's stepping down. The solution is reform completion under his supervision and leadership. Moreover, Al-Manar's phrases suggest that the reform program was not born with the crisis. It is, rather, an old active one through which the authorities have been trying to put an end to corruption and improve living conditions on all levels. The channel employed the term 'Comprehensive reform.'

Reassuring that the reform program started before the crisis suggests that Al-Manar does not want to show the weakness of the regime. That is, meeting the demands of the opponents was not due to fear of falling down, but the government responded to that in accordance with a reform plan which had been in action and which was executed before the crisis.

"Backing the president Al-Assad"<sup>599</sup> (17 times) is one of the most prominent purposes of demonstrating. This is a signifier of the inevitability of the desire of the people to keep Al-Assad in power as the president of the Syrian State.

"The Syrians have said their word: Yes to a strong, united and intact Syria. Yes to the president Bashar, who is leading Syria to the better."<sup>600</sup> The journalist did not say: 'the Syrian demonstrators.' He just said: 'The Syrians'. This suggests that all the Syrian people without exception support the government and the president. "The Syrians said their word" is a significance of the steadiness of the supporters and the inevitability of their absolute support of Al-Assad. In this quotation, Al-Manar employed the influential force of customs and traditions. In Syria, if someone wants to emphasize the steadfastness of their position, they say: "I have said my word". This means that they will by no means withdraw the decision they have made. This shows another tool Al-Manar used in the context of its defensive policy of president Assad.

<sup>597</sup> 29 March 2011. "تأتي هذه المسيرة ردا على محاولات لضرب الاستقرار والتعايش السلمي."

<sup>598</sup> "دعما أو تأييدا لمسيرة الإصلاح" و "دعما أو تأييدا لبرنامج الإصلاح"

<sup>599</sup> "دعما/تأييدا للرئيس الأسد"

<sup>600</sup> 21 June 2011. "السوريون قلوا كلمتهم: نعم لسوريا قوية، واحدة، متماسكة، و نعم للرئيس بشار الذي يقود سوريا نحو الأفضل"

Demonstrating "to condemn the conspiracy and to refuse external interference of all kinds." (18 times)<sup>601</sup> Demonstrating "to support the steady stance of Syria and to confront the campaigns of deformation that try to hurt the unity and stability of Syria."<sup>602</sup> These are signifiers of the Syrian people's awareness that there is an international conspiracy which tries to eradicate the Syrian State that is resisting and confronting Israel and all the countries which try to dominate the peoples and their resources.

"Holding on to Syria's national approach"<sup>603</sup> is a significance of the Syrians' support to the policies of the Syrian resistant government which stands in the face of occupation and of their backing the policy that aims at the unity of the Arab nation. "The Syrians who took part in the demonstration assured that *fitna* will not affect them and that they will stay under the Syrian flag refusing the abuse of the security of the homeland."<sup>604</sup> This is a significance of the strong bond between the government and the people (they will stay under the Syrian flag), and a signifier of a high morale on the part of the regime supporters.

Demonstrating "to reassure the national unity" (5 times) is a significance of the full refusal of the opposition's practices which try to tear the Syrian society on doctrinal and sectarian bases.

"The gathering of the Syrians around their national army"<sup>605</sup> is an indication of the loyalty of the Syrian people to the Syrian armed forces (The Homeland Protectors). These are the forces which protect the citizens and foster peace on the Syrian land. "The crowded people in Damascus and other cities complimented the Syrian army which represents the safety valve, the unity and the national sovereignty for them."<sup>606</sup>

Demonstrating "to refuse the resolutions of the Arab League."<sup>607</sup> The Syrian people were very angry with the resolutions of the Arab League against the Syrian State (the regime). The women's anger with the Arab attitudes appeared prominently. The ladies condemned manliness and immorality<sup>608</sup>. That is to say, all the Arab countries failed Syria which was exposed to a universal conspiracy. This is a significance of the disloyalty of some Arabs to Syria through yielding to foreign countries (the enemies of Syria). In this context, Al-Manar covered the activities of some Lebanese ladies who came to Syria to back the Syrians. These women expressed the awareness of the Syrian women who understood the targets of the conspiracy and discovered the game. Therefore, they went down the streets to refuse all the attempts which lead their country to bloodshed, destruction and *fitna*<sup>609</sup>.

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<sup>601</sup> "استنكرا للمؤامرة و رفضا لكل التتخلات الخارجية"

<sup>602</sup> 03 July 2011. "دعما لمواقف سوريا الثابتة و التصدي لحملات التشوية التي تحاول النيل من وحدة سوريا و استنكارا لها"

<sup>603</sup> 03 July 2011. "التمسك بنهج سوري الوطني و القومي"

<sup>604</sup> 15 June 2011. "وأكد السوريون المشاركون في التظاهرة أن الفتنة لن تنال منهم، وأنهم سيقفون تحت راية العلم السوري، رافضين العبث بأمن الوطن"

<sup>605</sup> 30 October 2011. "التفاف السوريين حول جيشهم الوطني"

<sup>606</sup> 21 June 2011. "المحتشدون في دمشق و غيرها، حثوا الجيش السوري الذي يشكل صمام الأمان و الوحدة و السيادة الوطنية بالنسبة لهم"

<sup>607</sup> 15 November 2011, 27 November 2011. "رفضاً لقرارات الجامعة العربية"

<sup>608</sup> 15 November 2011.

<sup>609</sup> 15 November 2011.

Al-Manar indicated that many of the activists on the network sites, societies and institutions in the private sector are those who called for demonstrating and supporting the president. This is an implicit message the aim of which is disparaging the opposition's propaganda stating that the regime obliged the people to participate in pro-regime processions; i.e. the regime forces the students, the employees, the workers and so on to take part in processions replying to the opposing demonstrations.

In 2013 the purposes of demonstrating were totally different. Condemning the universal conspiracy, supporting the president and the reforms were no longer the slogans of the processions. The only aim was supporting the Syrian army and its operations against the armed people. This does not negate the implicit backing of the president but the editorial policy of Al-Manar together with the pro-regime channels avoided talking about the president personally. They avoided showing the popular support of Al-Assad (avoiding the personalization of the crisis).

Restricting the demonstration purposes to the people's support of the army gives the crisis a national characteristic. The army soldiers who protect the homeland are the sons of the people. They are the Syrian youth and men who encounter the mercenaries. This means that the civilians demonstrate in order to express their gratitude to the sons of their home who die in the cause of protecting them. They demonstrate to raise the morale of the soldiers and to say that the people back the Syrian army, the army of the homeland. The target of focusing on this purpose is confronting opposition's propaganda stating that the Syrian army kills the civilians.

#### 4. The Slogans

"We sacrifice our soul and blood for you, Bashar!"<sup>610</sup> i.e., the Syrian citizens are ready to sacrifice themselves for the leader, for the president. This is a significance of how deep their loyalty to Al-Assad is.

"God, Syria, and Bashar only"<sup>611</sup> means that three axes can never be bargained: God (faith), Syria (the homeland), and Bashar (the resistant leader). "Only" means that the Syrian people have decided their choices; the people will not accept anything that contradicts these three axes.

"God is with you. The people are with you"<sup>612</sup>, i.e., Al-Assad gains the unanimous backing and the Godly support. Consequently, the one who is granted victory by God can be beaten by no one. This slogan also means that Al-Assad gains the people's support. This is a signifier of the legality of Al-Assad's rule and policy on religious grounds (God is with him) and on popular grounds (the people are with him). This slogan can be considered as a confrontation of the opposition which

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610 21 June 2011. "بالروح، بالدم نفدك يا بشار"

611 30 October 2011. "الله، سوريا، بشار و بس"

612 29 March 2011. "الله معك، الشعب معك"

considers Al-Assad as an enemy of God, an unbeliever whom fighting against is a must in order to bring victory to God's religion (Islam).

"Syria is protected by God"<sup>613</sup> is a significance of the confidence in victory because Syria – i.e. the government and the people – are haloed by God's protection. Therefore, the terrorist groups cannot gain victory.

"One, one, one; the Syrian people are one"<sup>614</sup> an indication that all the different ethnic, religious, political and social groups of the people stand hand in hand with the government and the president against the terrorists and the conspiracy.

"God may compliment the army."<sup>615</sup> The people are praying to God to bless the armed forces which protect Syria. The voice tone of the demonstrators suggests absolute pride and contentedness with the Syrian army's operations.

"Our people are stronger than their armies"<sup>616</sup> means that the foreign, especially the western armies which called to the necessity of military interference in Syria in order to overthrow the regime can never beat the Syrian people because they believe in their cause, in their government, in their leader and in gaining victory on the conspiracy.

## 5. The Interviews

The correspondents of Al-Manar seemed enthusiastic during covering the pro-government popular movement. The tone of their voices suggests great contentment and happiness due to their being among the demonstrators. They seemed part of these pro-regime people.

(3)



The journalist is involved among Assad supporters and enthusiastic towards the event<sup>617</sup>.

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613 30 October 2011. "سوريا الله حاميه"

614 21 June 2011. "واحد واحد، الشعب السوري واحد"

615 21 June 2011, 23 January 2013, 15 February 2013, 05 April 2013. "الله محبتي الجيش"

616 20 January 2012. "شعبنا أقوى من جيوشهم"

617 21 June 2011.



Al-Manar's sample contained interviews with the female and male demonstrators from various age groups. Al-Manar's correspondents and the demonstrators interacted as if they all were one hand gathered around one target (the media and the people are one hand in the face of the enemies of Syria). The majority of the women were wearing *hijabs*, which is a significance that their loyal attitude towards the regime represents the Sunni sect.

(4)



Assad supporting woman wearing the Sunni hijab<sup>618</sup>.

Here are declarations of some women: "I'll say to all the Syrian people, to every mother, every child, and to every saboteur: 'For the sake of Allah, I kiss your hands and feet, don't make us cry! Syria is beautiful. Don't destroy it.'"<sup>619</sup> This is a pleading message to all those who demonstrate or want to demonstrate against the regime so that they may stop their activities. The phrase: "I kiss your hands and feet"<sup>620</sup> was used to express how immense the pleading was so that the opponents may not cause instability in Syria.

"Their conspiracies fell down on the shoes of the Syrian people."<sup>621</sup> This is a significance of the inevitability of the certain failure of the conspiracy owing to the awareness of the Syrian people. Here, the Syrian people's shoes seem of higher rank than the conspiracy. In many Arab countries, when one wants to show the weakness of the opponent, one describes them as someone falling down under the feet or the shoe.

"We sacrifice ourselves for the army. Our hearts were torn for those who were torn."<sup>622</sup> This means that, the people were very sad for the death of the soldiers of the Syrian army who were killed by the armed groups and whose bodies were torn to pieces. "We demonstrate because we love the president. Bashar is a red line and the Syrian people are a red line. The conspiracy is big,

618 21 June 2011.

619 21 June 2011. "بدي قول للشعب السوري كلياته، لكل أم، لكل ولد، لكل سُخْرَب، مَشَان الله، أبوس إيديك و إجرِيك، لا تَبْكُونَا، سوريا حلوة لا تخربوها".

620 A Syrian expression used to indicate a large extent of beseeching.

621 21 June 2011. "سقطت مؤامرتن على أذى الشعب السوري".

622 21 June 2011. "نحن فدى الجيش، تقطع قلبنا على تقطعوا".

but we'd like to tell them that the Syrian people are greater than any conspiracy."<sup>623</sup> The first purpose of this message is answering the opposing propaganda stating that the regime forces the people to go out demonstrating in order to prove the masses support for him, "We demonstrate because we love the president." The president and the people are red lines that must not be crossed. These phrases have a threatening character towards all those who might think of fighting against Al-Assad and the people who believe in the credibility of the regime concerning the resistance of the Zionist occupation. Linking between threatening (red line) and the existence of a conspiracy suggests that the power which the regime supporters have emerges from their belief in the fact that this regime is exposed to a plot which tries to eradicate it due to its important role in the Arab and international arenas and suggests that the fall of the conspiracy is connected to the awareness of the Syrian people who support their government and its policy.

"We see that they say that we are against the president. Watch and observe on your own! We love the president."<sup>624</sup> The purpose of this message is clear and explicit: challenging and confronting the opponent propaganda which claims that the people hate Al-Assad and want to get rid of him.

"No force can oblige me to come and cheer for the president, for Bashar Al-Assad, except my love of my homeland."<sup>625</sup> That is, the opposition is lying when it says that the regime forces people to demonstrate in support of the president. "Love of homeland is what drags me to come here." She is cheering to Al-Assad because she loves her homeland. This is an implicit indication that the president is the symbol of the homeland, of Syria. "Let them come and see this popular wedding party. This is the national procession for the president. Let them come and see the truth."<sup>626</sup> These statements suggest that the president is the groom and Syria is the bride. These processions turned into merry-making rituals similar to the wedding rituals: singing, dancing and so on. This woman is inviting the anti-regime channels to come and see things in reality, to see how the Syrians love their leader, their homeland, through backing the protector of the homeland (Al-Assad). Assad being the bridegroom and Syria the bride in a society which is still patriarchal to a great extent means that Assad is the protector and the fosterer of Syria. Moreover, if the "bridegroom" was endangered, the female would collapse. What is meant here is that the stability of the female (Syria) is linked to the existence and strength of the male (Assad).

"We say to his Excellency the president: 'We are proud of you. You are the crown of our heads. You raise our heads among Arabs and the whole world. We have been breast-fed Arab Nationalism as infants.'<sup>627</sup> This is a significance that Al-Assad's political stances, especially concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict and his noncompliance to the western orders, made the Syrian people feel proud among the other Arab peoples some of whose rulers yielded to the Israeli and American

"نحن منطلق لأنه منجب الرئيس، و بشار الأسد خط أحمر، و الشعب السوري خط أحمر، و المؤامرة كبيرة بين منجب نقلن كمان الشعب السوري أكبر من أي مؤامرة" 21 June 2011. 623

"عم نشوف أنه الناس عم يقولوا إنه نحن ضد الرئيس ففترجوا و شوفوا الحالكن، نحن منجب الرئيس" 21 June 2011. 624

"ماقي قوة بتجبرني آجي أهتف للرئيس، لبشار الأسد، غير حب الوطن" 30 October 2011. 625

"خليهن يجو يشوفو هالعرس الشعبي، هي المسيرة الوطنية للرئيس، خليهن يجو يشوفو الحقيقة" 30 October 2011. 626

"منقول لسيادة الرئيس: نحن منفتحون فيك، أنت تاج راسنا، و رافع راسنا بين العرب و بين العالم كله، و نحن راضعين القومية العربية من نحن صغار" 30 October 2011. 627

hegemony on the Arab region. "We have been breast-fed Arab Nationalism" is an indication that the principles which the ruling regime upholds flow in the blood of the Syrian people. The most prominent among these principles is believing in the existence of an Arab Homeland, an Arab nationalism that should be protected from all kinds of external aggression.

"I compliment all the martyrs of Syria and may Allah compliment the Arab Syrian army."<sup>628</sup> The content of the citizens' discourse in 2013 was different. Talking about the army and the victims of the terrorist groups' practices became the most important content. "We will remain standstill thank to our army, our valiant soldiers and our heroes."<sup>629</sup> This is a signifier of the entire confidence in the victory of the army. This woman has employed the first-person pronoun: 'we, our army, our valiant soldiers, our heroes'. She did not say 'army, valiant soldiers, heroes'. This suggests a strong, intimate bond between the people and the soldiers of the army.

"May Allah compliment the Syrian army and bring them back to their families in the best of shape and health. We are worth nothing without them."<sup>630</sup> The girl is praying to God that the soldiers of the Syrian army may not be hurt and may be destined to join their families back again. Then she assures that the citizens cannot live safely and securely without the protection of the army "We are worth nothing without them."<sup>631</sup>

(5)



To indicate the popularity of the Syrian army, Al-Manar presents images of kids and adults with the soldiers and officers of the army<sup>632</sup>.

Some women expressed their displeasure with the opponents who demonstrate violently and asked them to stop disturbing the Syrians.

<sup>628</sup> 15 February 2013. "أنا بحبي كل شهيد سوريا، و الله محبي الجيش العربي السوري."

<sup>629</sup> 15 February 2013. "رح نضل صامدين بجيشنا القوي و بأبطالنا و ببواسلنا."

<sup>630</sup> 15 February 2013. "الله يحبي الجيش السوري و يرجع لأهلن سالمين غانمين يارب، و نحن من دونن ما منسوا شي أبداً."

<sup>631</sup> A Syrian expression which is used to indicate the importance of something or somebody.

<sup>632</sup> 27 June 2011.

Here are the statements of some of the Syrian youth and men: "We are here to support the president, the nerve of the country."<sup>633</sup> This is an indication of the importance of Al-Assad whom this young man likened to the importance of the nerves to the human body.

"As long as America and Israel hate Bashar Al-Assad, we will keep loving him."<sup>634</sup> This is an implicit signifier that Al-Assad is the symbol of the right while America and Israel are symbols of evil. America and Israel's hatred of Al-Assad is considered an honour to this president because the evil hates the right. Therefore, the people will love the president so long as the evil forces in the world hate him.

"We have all come here to express our love and loyalty to this country and to the leader of this country. We are all one hand and will not allow anyone to interfere in our affairs."<sup>635</sup> This is a significance that demonstrating aims at confronting all those who try to separate the slices of the Syrian community and destroy the security in Syria.

"The national cohesion is the strongest rock on which all conspiracies fall apart." <sup>636</sup> In plain English, the countries which try to sabotage Syria will never succeed as long as the people are one hand. These statements suggest that the opposition is not only an enemy of the regime but also of the people. "Certainly, the army is the protection of the homeland. Never think that the strangers may protect your homeland! The army is the one who protects your homeland."<sup>637</sup> This is a significance that the Syrian people refuse the armed groups who came into Syria with the pretext of supporting the oppressed people who are exposed to the assaults of the regime's forces.

## **The Syrian President and Regime as Presented by Al-Manar**

### **How Was the Image of President AL-Assad introduced on Al-Manar's Screen?**

In the studied sample, Al-Manar did not allocate full reports talking about the personality of president Al-Assad or his deeds. However, Al-Assad's name was mentioned in some contexts the most prominent of which are: the popular support through the processions, the statements of the citizens supporting the president, and the declarations of the Syrian officers and soldiers. This shows the positive points of the president as expressed by the people and the homeland protectors (the army and the security personnel). As if Al-Manar were trying to say: 'Look! This is Al-Assad whose actions you condemn. Behold! The people are with him, the soldiers are with him. Everybody loves and supports him. Avoiding to personalize the Syrian crisis by Al-Manar, i.e. to

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633 29 March 2011. "إننا هنا لتأييد الرئيس السوري عصب البلاد"

634 21 June 2011. "طالما أمريكا وإسرائيل يتكره بشار الأسد نحن منضل منحيو"

635 21 June 2011. "جينا كلنا لنعبر عن حبنا وولائنا لهذا البلد ولقائد هذا البلد، ونحن كلنا إيد وحدة و لارح نخلي حدا يتدخل فينا"

636 30 October 2011. "اللحمة الوطنية هي الصخرة الأقرى التي تتكسر عليها كل المؤمرات"

637 15 February 2013. "يعني الجيش هو حماية الوطن، لا تفكر أنه الغريب بيحامي وطنك، الجيش هو الي بيحامي وطنك"

associate it to the personality of president Al-Assad, suggests that the channel wants to blast the mental image which the opposing channels introduce about the ruling dictator.

## **The Regime's Image**

Covering the regime's actions. Al-Manar depended on the direct explicit method. Figurative language, metaphor and metonymy were accidental. The attitudes of Al-Manar's media personnel which supported the regime's policy and operations appeared through several methods: the news cadre selectivity and the persons they interview, the voice tone, accompanying the army in its operations, and the enthusiasm on the victories of the government forces.

### **1. Labeling**

Al-Manar did not employ the term "regime" to talk about the Syrian government or the government military forces. This term only appeared in quotations Al-Manar recalled from anti Syrian government sources. This suggests that the term "regime" is considered a negative description of the government which the opposing channels employ so that the state may seem ruled by a gang whose apex controls all the security, military and administrative structures. Al-Manar tried to sustain the image which shows the Syrian state as one of sovereignty and dignity. Therefore, the channel used the terms: "the Syrian authorities" (12 times) and "the Syrian government" (16 times).

Al-Manar never used the terms: "the government army", "the regime's army" or "Al-Assad's army". It rather employed "the Syrian army" (144 times) or "the Arab Syrian army" (14 times). This is a significance that this army is the army of the homeland, all the people, an Arab nationalist army which champions the cause of all the Arab nation. Al-Manar used the word: "the army" (124 times), which is an implicit message the purpose of which is the absolute denial of the existence of any other army. All those who face the Syrian army are only criminal gangs. In spite of the appearance of the opposing FSA and recognizing it by many Arab and international actors, Al-Manar did not give the name of 'army' except to the Syrian army.

"The security forces", "order-keeping forces", "Police forces", "Engineering personnel in the Syrian army". Al-Manar showed the activities of these actors within positive contexts, which suggests that they constitutionally practice their assigned tasks: Keeping the public security, suppression of offences, and protecting the public state institutions. While the other channels tried to show these actors as predators, Al-Manar used to present them in a way that shows the Syrian state as one that has dignity and hierarchic institutions which stick to the law.

## 2. Justifying the Security and Military Movements of the Regime's Forces; Propaganda and Counter Propaganda

In 2011, Al-Manar tried to justify the movements of the Syrian army in a direct way. It used explicit phrases. The voice tone of the media personnel emphasized the legality of all the actions of the government. For example: "A few days after some regions of Idleb in the west of Syria spiraled out of control as a result of a movement led by armed groups, units of the Syrian army started a security operation in this governorate."<sup>638</sup> "After blocking the roads, a military asset was assigned with the task of heading to the aforementioned region to put an end to the crimes of those armed groups and prevent them from cutting off the international highway again."<sup>639</sup> This is a direct discourse the purpose of which is justifying the military actions as the Syrian army does its operations in order to restore some regions which had been controlled by armed groups. It is worth mentioning that the discourse of Al-Manar in 2011 contained information about the victories gained by the armed opposition like controlling some regions only in the context of justifying the government military actions, i.e. this military action seems to take place as a reaction to the actions of the armed gangs; the terrorists controlled regions so the Syrian army had to use weapons to protect themselves and the citizens. This justification is important in the context of large Arab and international media campaigns which stressed the illegality of the Syrian army's movements.

"Sources assure that what is going on in Aleppo is a military operation through which the Syrian army tries to expel the armed gangs from the quarters of the city after they wreaked havoc and destruction in it."<sup>640</sup> This is a significance that there is a legal justification for the movements of the Syrian army. Employing the phrase "expel the armed gangs" may arouse questions: where are they going to be expelled? To other Syrian regions? If it were so, this means that the movements of the army would be in vain as the gangs would cause chaos in other regions. On the other hand, if they were expelled across the Syrian borders, this means that other countries would pay the price because the Syrian forces would be unable to tackle the crisis in a responsible and accurate way. However, it could mean that Al-Manar is sending implicit messages about the involvement of some countries in sending mercenary militants to fight in Syria. So, expelling them to the countries which support and finance them would be a legal task on which the Syrian army could not be criticized.

The year 2013 witnessed the entrance of large numbers of the armed people who came from different Arab and foreign countries. Consequently, employing the verb 'expel' has a significance that suggests the inevitability and necessity of confronting the mercenaries and sending them out of Syria via the countries which allowed them to enter like Turkey.

<sup>638</sup> 10 June 2011. "بعد أيام قليلة على خروج بعض المناطق في محافظة إدلب شمال غرب سوريا عن السيطرة بفعل حركة تقودها مجموعات مسلحة، شرعت وحدات من الجيش السوري بعملية أمنية في هذه المحافظة."

<sup>639</sup> 18 April 2011. "بعد قطع الطرقات تم تكليف قطعة عسكرية من وحدات الجيش مهمة التحرك إلى المنطقة المذكورة لوضع حد لجرائم تلك المجموعات الإجرامية المسلحة و لمنعها من تكرار قطع الطريق الدولي."

<sup>640</sup> 28 July 2012. "تؤكد المصادر أن ما يحدث في حلب هو عملية عسكرية يسعى من خلالها الجيش السوري إلى طرد المسلحين من أحياء المدينة، بعدما عاثوا فيها خراباً و دماراً."

"The Syrian army is accomplishing its operations heading to reclaim the geography it lost and planning to proceed deeper to deter the armed gangs and expel them towards the Turkish borders."<sup>641</sup> In this quotation, expelling the armed gangs towards the Turkish borders does not mean involving other countries in the Syrian crisis by the Syrian army. It rather indicates that Turkey is the one which opened its doors to those armed people, received them, financed them, and sent them to Syria. Therefore, they should go back to where they came from.

As from the first month of the crisis, Al-Manar promoted the government propaganda which assured the existence of fundamental extremist (Salafist) organizations which intended to establish *Salafi* Islamic emirates and that the Syrian government would resolutely confront and chase those terrorists wherever they were until it eliminated all forms of armed rebellion. The opposing channels used to make fun of this propaganda while Al-Manar strongly adopted it. In 2012, the extremist organizations began to show themselves and boast of their operations. The question that arises is: were really there Salafist groups which intended to establish emirates or did this propaganda helped to direct the minds of the opponents and incite them to change into religious extremism?

Al-Manar repeatedly reported the regime's propaganda that the purpose of security-keeping personnel was the keenness on the safety of the citizens and the properties, that the Syrian forces respond positively to the appeals for help which they receive from the people, and that the supervisors of the operation hope to accomplish it within a few hours so that the citizens can come back to their cities. These are signifiers that the military forces are loyal to the people and that they bear their responsibility towards the citizens.

(6)



Elements of the Syrian army in a news context which highlights them as heroes and protectors of the people<sup>642</sup>.

The propaganda that the Syrian forces will withdraw in case the armed people withdraw, and that the Syrian army left the regions back to their barracks after they accomplished their task of controlling security and chasing the terrorist groups was repeatedly mentioned. This is an implicit

<sup>641</sup> 06 August 2013. "الجيش السوري يستكمل عملياته العسكرية متوجها لاستعادة ما خسره من جغرافيا و موجها أنظاره للتقدم أكثر لردع المسلحين و طردهم نحو الحدود التركية"

<sup>642</sup> 01 August 2012.

significance that the purpose of the military deployment was not extinguishing the civil revolution, but was only eliminating the terrorists.

"Syrian military sources assured us that with the departure of the Syrian army from Hama, the other military units get ready to depart from the cities after the elimination of the armed groups has been accomplished."<sup>643</sup> These statements contain a group of indications: First of all, a significance that reflects the confidence of the army in Al-Manar's correspondents who are capable of communicating directly with the military actors with no control or restrictions "sources assured us". Secondly, a signifier which suggests that the entrance of the army into the governorate of Hama was stirred by eliminating the terrorist groups not by committing massacres as a group of the opponent channels claimed, Thirdly, assuring the credibility of regime's propaganda about departing from the regions after retrieving security and safety.

(7)



The army returns to its barracks after bringing security and safety back<sup>644</sup>.

"Stopping these missiles or restricting them is dependent on the advances of the Syrian army into the circumference of the capital; the more the losses of the armed groups in the direct battles are, the larger the numbers of missiles they shoot."<sup>645</sup> In other words, the terrorist groups more densely shot their missiles on the civilians in Damascus whenever they felt that their collapse in the face of the Syrian army was close. So, the only solution to get rid of terrorism is military action. This message is a defensive reply to those who criticize the martial actions of the regime.

Al-Manar promoted the battles the regime intended to perform like "the decisive battle"<sup>646</sup>, "the army units are getting ready to launch a martial operation."<sup>647</sup> This forerunner reflects the regime's and the pro-regime's channels desire to introduce mental message showing that it has not fallen yet and that it is on its way to fight decisive battles, victorious ones.

643 11 August 2011. "مصادر عسكرية سورية أكدت لنا أنه مع خروج الجيش من حماه تستعد باقي الوحدات العسكرية للخروج من المدن بعد أن يتم القضاء على المجموعات المسلحة"

644 11 August 2011.

645 13 November 2013. "إيقاف هذه الفذائف أو الحد منها بات مرهونا بتقدم الجيش السوري في محيط العاصمة، فالمسلحون باتوا يصعدون من أعداد قذائفهم كلما ازدادت خسائرهم في المعارك المباشرة"

646 08 August 2012. "معركة الحسم"

647 15 February 2013. "تستعد وحدات الجيش لشن عملية عسكرية"



(8)



The moment of the army's victory and its control on an area<sup>648</sup>.

"The Syrian army sticks to international truces and commitments."<sup>649</sup> The implicit target of this propaganda is retorting to the counter propaganda about the regime's non-commitment to truces and non-implementing international covenants.

"The General Leadership of the Army and the Armed Forces is committed to tackle the violations, to retort to the sources of firing, to counter the terrorist gangs, and to chase their remnants"<sup>650</sup> indicates that it is necessary for the Syrian forces to use weapons and violate truces because of the assaults which the opposition performs; i.e., the opposition is the one who violates the conditions of the truces.

During covering the news which talk about massacres, Al-Manar frequently adopted the discourse of the official Syrian media aiming at disparaging the opponent advertising stating that the government forces committed those massacres. Al-Manar repeatedly recalled videos from the Syrian Space Channel showing the army, the doctors and a crew of Syrian government officials on the scene of the massacre. This showing up is an implicit significance that the regime is innocent from these charges.

While a group of the Arab channels were talking about the opposition's control on important regions of Syria, Al-Manar retorted that what was happening was a tactical withdrawal of the Syrian army waiting for reinforcements. The channel could never absolutely disaffirm as the communication techniques does not allow it to go far absenting the facts. However, it tried to lighten the effect of the heavy losses so that it could keep the high morale.

"We sacrifice our soul and blood for you, Syria!"<sup>651</sup> This slogan appeared in 2013 on the tongues of some government soldiers. This slogan amended from the original one "With soul and blood, we protect you, Bashar!" which totally disappeared from the slogans of the Syrian soldiers. This

648 11 August 2011

649 26 October 2012. "الجيش السوري يلتزم بالهدنة و العهد الدولية"

650 26 September 2012. "القيادة العامة للجيش و القوات المسلحة تلتزم بالتعامل مع الخروقات و الرد على مصادر النيران و التصدي للمجموعات الإرهابية المسلحة و ملاحقة فلولها"

651 22 June 2013. "بالروح، بالدم، نخذك سوريا"

is an implicit message which means that the army personnel are loyal to the homeland not to an individual ruler. This indicates that the soldiers and the pro-regime channels have been affected by the opponent propaganda which presents the soldiers of the Syrian army as gangs which respond to the orders of the ruling dictator and back him on a sectarian and interest basis.

Al-Manar denied that any dissensions happened, but even this denial did not take enough space in its reports. It was an accidental presentation. This suggests that the channel tried to avoid any subject that could weaken the morale.

The channel did not very much recall the armed opposition's propaganda directly and explicitly. It was an accidental recall. However, it always confronted the bases of this propaganda implicitly.

Al-Manar depended on the sources of the opposition in many cases. The main target of the channel was assuring its news through recalling the news mentioned by the sources of the enemy. For example, Al-Manar talks about Syrian army advances in its fight against the armed gangs. Then it assures the authenticity of this news through reporting news from the opponent UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), which assures that the Syrian army called in martial reinforcements and performed vast displacement operations so could control regions. 'Performing vast displacement operations' is a signifier of the immorality and criminality of the regime towards the civilians, However, Al-Manar's recalling of these signifiers gives them totally different significances; id est, the vast displacement campaigns become a significance that the armed forces could eradicate the terrorists.

Al-Manar featured the regime's propaganda about the Israeli American satisfaction with the Syrian crisis. The purpose of this recall is assuring the regime's resistance of the Israeli Zionist enemy and indicating that what is taking place in Syria is not a popular revolution. It is rather a conspiracy the target of which is abolishing the Syrian state which never kneeled nor yielded despite all sorts of pressures.

### **3. Uncovering the media disinformation**

Al-Manar disproved a lot of news which different mass media reported showing the Syrian regime as mistaken and committing crimes against the people. It is worth mentioning here that Al-Manar most frequently depended on the Syrian channels as main sources in its policy of uncovering the media disinformation. For instance, Al-Manar reported news from the Syrian Space Channel that the Syrian media searched, examined and refuted the news which talks about Syrian army personnel killing a citizen due to his participation in demonstrations<sup>652</sup>. Then, the Syrian Space Channel interviewed the same person who negated the news assuring that he is still alive and assuring his loyalty to the Syrian government through his reaction and the tone of his voice. His wife also expressed her respect and loyalty to the army through the phrase: "The army is us

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<sup>652</sup> 20 June 2011.

and ours. It is the son of the people."<sup>653</sup> This phrase is a significance that it impossible for the army to kill the sons of its homeland. The soldiers are Syrian citizens, not strangers, so they cannot kill citizens.

Another example on uncovering the media disinformation is about the corpses of army personnel who were said to be killed because they did not obey the orders asking them to oppress the popular movements<sup>654</sup>. Reporting from the Syrian Space Channel, Al-Manar presented an interview with armed people who were seized by the Syrian security personnel. One of them declared that someone asked them to kill the security personnel, take photos of the corpses and bury them in mass graves. The purpose of this action is sending videos to space channels in order to deform the image of the Syrian regime. Another armed person declared that there were actors who used to ask them to take images of the demonstrations. Then they presented these demonstrations on television screens in a completely different way. The image became abundant with signs, participants, and voices and screams of terrified people<sup>655</sup>.

"The army concentrates its strikes on a geographically limited grouping of the armed people. However, some media machines which are in conformity with these groups tried to magnify the event while the actual state of the field gives different details."<sup>656</sup> sometimes Al-Manar explicitly disproved the media which supported the armed opposition. The phrase: "the actual state of the field gives different details" is an implicit significance that Al-Manar has a high credibility because its news are based on information coming from the field while the other channels use unreliable sources.

Al-Manar negated and disproved the news of Al-Jazeera channel through depending on Syrian internal sources as the officials and eye witnesses. These are some of the descriptions Al-Manar employed against Al-Jazeera channel: "untrue news", "slandering and lying", "absolutely false news", "aiming at inciting and provoking the citizens", "in the frame of the large conspiracy on Syria the managers of which are trying to provoke the international society against Syria.", "aims at fomenting confusion and chaos"<sup>657</sup>. According to Al-Manar, the Syrian army is too humble to advertise its achievements and victories against the armed gangs. Whereas other mass media does not stop talking about assumed achievements which the armed gangs realize and which could change the facts on the ground.<sup>658</sup> Al-Manar's emphasis on the humbleness of the Syrian army in declaring its achievements reflects Al-Manar's desire to emphasize the strength of the Syrian state and its dispensing with propaganda and exaggerated glorification.

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<sup>653</sup> "الجيش منا و فينا، ابن الشعب" 653

<sup>654</sup> 20 June 2011.

<sup>655</sup> 20 June 2011.

<sup>656</sup> 06 August 2013. "تتركز ضربات الجيش نحو تكتل محدود للمسلحين من الناحية الجغرافية، لكن ماكينات إعلام تتسجم مع هذه المجموعات عملت على تضخيم ما يجري، بينما واقع الميدان ينبأ بتفاصيل مختلفة"

<sup>657</sup> 29 October 2011.

<sup>658</sup> "أخبار كاذبة"، "أخبار لاصحة لها على الإطلاق"، "تهدف إلى تحريض المواطنين و إثارتهم"، "تأتي في إطار المؤامرة الكبرى على سوريا و التي يسعى مدبروها إلى إثارة المجتمع الدولي ضد سورية"، "تهدف إلى إثارة البلبلة و الفوضى".

<sup>658</sup> 01 March 2012.

#### 4. Features of Weakness

During 2011 and the first half of 2012. Al-Manar adopted the same method as that of the official Syrian television (the Syrian Space Channel). This method tried to present the Syrian officers and soldiers as victims in addition to presenting the government organizational structure, with all its martial and civil sectors, as a target of terrorist groups which try to destroy it so as to weaken the Syrian state.

So, the Syrian government, the officers and soldiers, appeared as victims on Al-Manar's screen. The channel intensified its coverage of the burial ceremonies of the officers and soldiers who had been killed by the armed opposition. This coverage can be considered as a retort to the opposition's propaganda which shows the regime's forces as beasts which assault the unarmed people.

"And the statement of the Ministry of Interior was issued after the martyrdom of a brigadier general in the Syrian army, his two sons and his nephew by the bullets of these gangs in the city of Homs. Not only did these gangs kill the brigadier general, his two sons and his nephew, but they also performed harming to their dead bodies in a way that their limbs were cut off and their faces were deformed."<sup>659</sup> This is an implicit significance that the officers and their families are being unjustifiably exposed to being killed. That is, the officers are murdered out of work and out of battlefield. These phrases also have an emotional enticement as the officers are not only killed, but their bodies are also cut off and deformed, which is a signifier of the sadism of the armed people who target the Syrian Government forces.

This type of discourse was mostly apparent in the first half of 2011; i.e. the FSA was not formed yet. In other words, Al-Manar assured the existence of armed groups before the FSA appeared, albeit many Arab and international actors consider FSA the first opposing armed organization in Syria. This coverage shows the desire of the channel to acquit the Syrian government forces of the charges directed against them, and its desire to concentrate on the victim's role in order to create a justification for the government martial actions.

"Syria has held burial processions of a number of military officers who were killed by unknown armed people during travelling to and from work."<sup>660</sup> The word 'Syria' is feminine in Arabic. Syria has been likened to a girl who performed the burial rituals of the officers. This metaphor serves as an emotional enticement in the favor of the soldiers of the government forces. Syria seems like the girl or the bereaved mother for losing her sons. The phrase: "Syria has held burial processions" also has another signifier: the people are one body, one hand. The misfortune, sadness and pain of the citizens are one. This is also an indication that the relationship of the people and the government forces is a durable and solid one. The phrase: "during travelling to and from work" indicates that

<sup>659</sup> 19 April 2011.

"وجاء بيان الداخلية السورية بعد استشهاد عميد في الجيش السوري وولديه وإبن شقيقه برصاص عصابات مسلحة في مدينة حمص، إذ لم تكن هذه العصابات بقتل العميد وولده وإبن أخيه بل عمدت أيضاً للتكيد بقتلهم فقطعت أوصالهم وشوهت وجوههم".

<sup>660</sup> 21 April 2011. "شُيِّعت سورية عدداً من الضباط العسكريين الذين تمت تصفيتهم من قبل مسلحين مجهولين خلال تنقلهم من وإلى عملهم".

the channel always tries to assure the innocence of the Security and military forces. The officers were not in the battlefield and they were not at work; they were on their way home after work. This is an implicit significance that there is really no legal justification for killing these officers. "The order-keeping forces were exposed to shooting during doing their national duty and some of them were injured."<sup>661</sup> It is a legitimization of actions; a signifier of that the task of these forces is protecting the homeland from saboteurs. The soldiers are victims, not killers and their lives are exposed to danger in the cause of keeping security and safety.

The channel depicted the Syrians as standing together with the security and military forces and with the president Al-Assad. It intensified the coverage of funeral processions of the officers and soldiers and talked about them in a clear explicit language free from figurative expressions. For instance, "The funeral processions took place in many Syrian governorates", "The participants in the funeral procession carried the pictures of the president Bashar Al-Assad and the Syrian flags", "The Syrians held funeral processions for the martyred officers"<sup>662</sup> these are direct signifiers of the Syrian people's support for the security and military forces and of their sadness for their death.

The channel reiterated that the police forces do not carry any weapons, but they only perform order-keeping. Through this presentation it, notably, could not escape the fact of the deployment of the Syrian soldiers on the Syrian land (it admitted that these forces were deployed in order to keep security). It could not also absolutely deny this fact. Therefore, it tried to assure not using weapons by the police forces, disregarding that the recipient might ask how these forces kept security in hot, tense and disordered regions without using weapons. With the purpose of reassuring that the security and military forces are victims, Al-Manar highlighted the news of the massacres and mass graves, and presented pictures and videos of accumulated, heaped up dead bodies which suggest that the armed people murdered huge numbers of the Syrian soldiers and buried them in an inhuman way.

(9)



The army opens a mass grave committed by the armed gangs<sup>663</sup>.

<sup>661</sup> 27 November 2011. "عناصر قوات حفظ النظام في المدينة تعرضوا لإطلاق نار أثناء تأديتهم لواجبهم الوطني، ما أدى إلى إصابة عدد منهم بجروح".

<sup>662</sup> 21 April 2011. "انطلقت مواكب التشييع في عدة محافظات سورية"، "حمل المشاركون في التشييع صور الرئيس بشار الأسد و الأعلام السورية"، "شيع السوريون الضباط الشهداء".

<sup>663</sup> 13 June 2011.

Covering the massacres and mass graves in Syria was radically different in accordance with the predispositions of the channels. The victims of all the massacres on Al-Manar's screen were Syrian soldiers or civilians murdered by terrorists.

Stressing the image of the government and its soldiers as victims was important in 2011. It played the role of propagandistic defense in the face of the attack of a big number of channels on the Syrian regime. Al-Manar and the Syrian pro-regime channels' method was able to affect a slice of the Syrian and Arab people<sup>664</sup>. It managed to persuade them that the Syrian forces were innocent and that they did not commit any massacres against the civilians. In the first half of 2012, the channel continued to show the Syrian forces as a victim, but also as a hero and a hunter capable of confronting the armed people's assaults. In other words, Al-Manar balanced between the image of the victim and that of the hunter. Later, the media behavior of Al-Manar began to change because continuing with highlighting the image of the victim may lead to weakening the morale of the Syrian soldiers and the regime supporters as well. Al-Manar changed its method of dealing with the news concerning the murdered soldiers. Highlighting them as weak peaceful icons was no longer important. On the contrary, their death should be depicted as an honor and a victory. The funeral procession became like a wedding party with the murdered officer or soldier as the bridegroom whose family boasts his death in the cause of the homeland. This mechanism reflects one of the methods which Al-Manar employed in the psychological war during covering the Syrian crisis.

## 5. Features of Strength

Al-Manar presented the Syrian forces as a strong and cohesive structure. The channel did not mention any weak point concerning the army or the security forces. It completely absented the dissensions as well as the mistakes the soldiers committed against the Syrian people such as murder, robbery, etc. Only one piece of news<sup>665</sup> was found in the research sample which deals in short with the government's forming of a committee assigned to investigate the events which took place in the city of Daraa, the city where the opposing popular movement was launched and where a number of citizens and children were killed. The channel mentioned that the Syrian government was going to punish all those who have been responsible for committing any harm in those events. This is a signifier of the uprightness of the Syrian regime and its refusal of any mistake against the people. The image of the Syrian army was ideal as a perseverant and sacrificing one in the cause of the homeland and citizens.

Al-Manar repeatedly portrayed that the army has re-established the control of the state's authority over the city, the army strengthens its control over some regions, and that during hours, the army managed to exercise firm and full control. These are significances of the steadiness of

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<sup>664</sup> The researcher's notice when existing on the ground in Syria, and also through following up the social communication media noticed that the comments of the people suggest affectivity and believing.

<sup>665</sup> 19 March 2011.

the government forces in the face of the armed people, and of the ability of the army to protect the Syrian land and keep it under its leadership. "The Syrian army continues its deployment", "Units of the army have continued proceeding forward"<sup>666</sup>. These are implicit signifiers that the deployment of the army is a source of security and quietude. This verbal narration is supported by the voice tone of the media personnel which suggests implicit glorification of the Syrian military forces. "Continuing the martial operation"<sup>667</sup> is an indication of the fixedness and insistence of the government military forces. It suggests the quantitative and qualitative power of the armed opposition; despite the power of the Syrian army, it is still going on fighting against the armed people.

(10)



Showing pictures of the Syrian army's tanks during a talk about its progress<sup>668</sup>.

"The course of the events which redraws the field scene in Syria gets day by day in favor of bringing stability back in the disturbed areas."<sup>669</sup> This is a significance that there is an interrelation between the existence of the army and re-stabilization.

"Little by little, the achievement in Baba Amr will be uncovered. It will have field consequences concerning accelerating the conflict settlement in other areas."<sup>670</sup> By the time the opponents of the regime's policy were depicting the war in Baba Amr Quarter in Homs as one between the people's will and the criminal dictatorship, Al-Manar channel was boasting the regime's martial operations and describing them as an achievement and an ability to settle the conflict.

Al-Manar legalized the security settlement of the conflict and considered it the most important way of dealing with the crisis. It linked between the ability of the security personnel and the army to martially settle the conflict on the one hand, and realizing the aspirations of the Syrian people for reform on the other.

Al-Manar repeatedly promoted the security, martial settlement and escalation which is a signifier that the Syrian state has its grip over the situation.

<sup>666</sup> 03 July 2011. "الجيش السوري يتابع إنتشاره"، وحدات من الجيش تابعت تقدمها"

<sup>667</sup> 06 August 2013. "استمرار العملية العسكرية"

<sup>668</sup> 10 June 2011.

<sup>669</sup> 20 June 2011. "مجرى الأحداث التي تعيد رسم المشهد الميداني في سوريا تصب يوما بعد يوم في مصلحة إعادة الاستقرار في بعض مناطق الإضطرابات"

<sup>670</sup> 01 March 2012. "شينا فشينا سينكتف حجم الإنجاز في بابا عمر، إذ ستكون له تداعياته الميدانية لجهة تسريع الحسم في مناطق أخرى"

The terms of settlement and escalation have been used by the opposing media to indicate the savageness and brutality of this regime. However, the significance of these terms has radically differed on Al-Manar's screen. This means that terminology differs in accordance with the sender and the means.

On 18 July 2012, an explosion took place in the Syrian National Security building. Consequently, many high-ranking Syrian officers were killed. The channels opposing the Syrian government tried to magnify the result of this event and its influence on the regime's structure suggesting that the regime was about to fall and that its end was a matter of a time that does not exceed hours. Al-Manar retorted to this media presentation by stating that "The Syrian military and security organs have received a fatal blow. Yet, taking a holistic view at their structure uncovers that it is wider and more comprehensive than the National Security concerning the centers and the roles and their distribution."<sup>671</sup> Al-Manar did not deny the importance of this event, but at the same time explicitly showed the regime as a structure which cannot be easily weakened. The way Al-Manar covered the explosion of the National Security building also has an implicit message which assures that the Syrian government was exposed to assaults; so, the security personnel and the army have the right to move martially in order to protect the state and the people.

"The field advance of the Syrian army does not stop"<sup>672</sup> and "The achievements of the Syrian army continue."<sup>673</sup> These phrases aim to disprove the opposition's propaganda about the falling of many areas under the control of the militants. These verbal items were supported by images of Syrian soldiers raising the Syrian flags in every area they have under their control eliminating all the armed opposition groups.

"And the armed groups in Sbeina were eradicated. During the past few days, their fortifications could not succeed in standing still in front of the advance of the Syrian army units"<sup>674</sup>, "The fortifications of the armed groups could not stop the advances of the Syrian army. The windows of the homes turned into barricades and screens."<sup>675</sup>

This form of discourse emerged in 2013 when showing the government forces as victims came to an end and presenting them as steadfast heroes dominated instead.

## 6. The Actions of the Regime's Forces

### 6.1. Against the Armed Factions

As the channel does not admit the legality of the armed opposition, and rather consider it vandalistic terrorist groups, all the actions of the government forces seemed as heroism and achievements. They also seemed as a natural right of the security and military forces. So, Al-Manar

<sup>671</sup> 18 July 2012. "تلقت الأجهزة الأمنية والعسكرية السورية ضربة قاضية لكن نظرة شاملة إلى هيكليتها تكشف أنها أوسع و أشمل من الأمن القومي من جهة المراكز والأدوار و توزعها."

<sup>672</sup> 25 April 2013. "لا يتوقف التقدم الميداني للجيش السوري."

<sup>673</sup> 13 October 2013, 17 November 2013. "تستمر إنجازات الجيش السوري."

<sup>674</sup> 17 November 2013. "وقضي أمر المجموعات المسلحة في السبيّة، لم تفلح تحصيناتهم على مدار الأيام الماضية في الصمود أمام تقدم وحدات الجيش السوري."

<sup>675</sup> 29 May 2013. "لم تنفع تحصينات المجموعات المسلحة من منع تقدم الجيش السوري، نوافذ البيوت تحولت متاريس و سواتر."



legalized all the security and martial actions of the regime and considered them as reactions the purpose of which is confronting the actions of the saboteurs.

In 2011, Al-Manar often employed words signifying that the attitude of the government is a defensive one: "The military units confronted armed groups"<sup>676</sup>, "The army confronted the attack of the armed people" (9 times), "The security forces tried to deter the terrorists."<sup>677</sup> In 2012, Al-Manar's discourse balanced between the two cases of defense and attack: "The Syrian army started its land attack on Aleppo."<sup>678</sup>, "The army strangleholds on the armed people" (8 times), "The Syrian forces deter the attack of the terrorist groups."<sup>679</sup>, "The army destroyed centers of the terrorists."<sup>680</sup> However, in 2013, the offensive nature dominated the actions of the regime against the armed people.

Al-Manar did not use the method of exaggeration during presenting the regime's actions against the armed opposition. This helps to give an impression of the power of the Syrian state and to dwarf the power of the armed groups. In other words, the Syrian forces seem to control the situation, and all what they do seems as a normal and simple thing in comparison with their holistic capability. For example: "Syria seized a cargo of weapons"<sup>681</sup>, "the armed forces arrested a group of the wanted fugitives"<sup>682</sup> (6 times), "The army captured amounts of weapons and munitions"<sup>683</sup> (20 times), "The engineering units dismantled booby traps and explosive devices"<sup>684</sup> (15 times), "Confiscation of a car which contained armed people."<sup>685</sup> This sort of phrases suggests that the size of the martial crisis is smaller than what is depicted by the anti-regime channels and that what is happening on the ground is only a group of normal daily events; a group of lawbreakers are trying to devastate the country and the military and security forces are confronting them.

In the studied sample, the discourse of Al-Manar was characterized by repetition. The channel echoed the same phrases in describing the regime's actions. "The Syrian army is chasing the armed terrorist groups"<sup>686</sup> (26 times) is a significance that the actions of the government forces are a duty that must be performed as chasing criminals is one of the top tasks of the security personnel.

"The security forces proceed to chase the terrorists" and "The forces of the Arab Syrian army are still chasing the remnants of the armed groups"<sup>687</sup> (15 times) are signifiers of continuing the martial action. The purpose of these significances is, on one hand, justifying the regime's continual

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<sup>676</sup> 19 April 2011. "تصدت الوحدات العسكرية لمجموعات مسلحة"

<sup>677</sup> 18 April 2011. "الجيش صد هجوما للمسلحين"، "قوات الأمن حاولت ردع الإرهابيين"

<sup>678</sup> 08 August 2012. "الجيش السوري بدأ هجومه البري على حلب"

<sup>679</sup> 23 December 2012. "الجيش يضيق الخناق على المسلحين"، "القوات السورية تصد هجوم المجموعات الإرهابية"

<sup>680</sup> 29 September 2012. "الجيش دمر مراكز للإرهابيين"

<sup>681</sup> 12 October 2011. "سوريا أوقفت شحنة أسلحة"

<sup>682</sup> "القوات المسلحة ألقت القبض على مجموعة من المطلوبين الفارين من العدالة"

<sup>683</sup> "الجيش استولى على كميات من الأسلحة و الذخائر"

<sup>684</sup> "وحدات الهندسة فككت متفجرات و عبوات ناسفة"

<sup>685</sup> 12 October 2011. "مصادرة سيارة كان يستقلها المسلحون"

<sup>686</sup> "الجيش السوري يلاحق المجموعات الإرهابية المسلحة"

<sup>687</sup> "القوى الأمنية تتابع ملاحقة الإرهابيين"، "مازال قوى الجيش العربي السوري تتابع ملاحقتها لظلول المجموعات المسلحة"

deployment of its forces and confronting the channels which criticize the continuity of bombarding the civilians by the regime's forces on the other hand.

"The army eliminated a number of the armed people", "The security personnel kill armed people"<sup>688</sup> (40 times). Al-Manar turned the murder operations carried out by the army into heroism.

"The army seized large amounts of weapons and ammunition"<sup>689</sup> (20 times) is a signifier the aim of which is proving that the armed people have a lot of weapons. Consequently, proving that the news stating that the armed people are killing the police and security forces are true, and not lies. This is also a signifier that the army has the right to confront groups which use the weapons illegally to terrify the people.

"The Syrian forces stopped two cars carrying weapons, explosives and nocturnal binoculars. After examining the seized items, their source turned out to be Israel; they contained Israeli-made Uzi machine guns which came from Lebanon"<sup>690</sup>, "Syria seized a weapons cargo whose source is Israel."<sup>691</sup> These are significances that the war on the regime is in the interest of Israel which supports the armed opposition with weapons. In many cases the channel substituted the terms: army, security and armed forces with the word 'Syria'; "Syria seized a weapons cargo"<sup>692</sup>, "Syria found centers for manufacturing weapons"<sup>693</sup> and so on. This verbal selectivity—'Syria'—implicitly suggests that the army and the security personnel are not sectarian militias or gangs as many opposing channels used to promote. Rather, the Syrian state is the one which is fighting groups of lawbreakers or gangs and militias which consist of mercenaries. "The security forces seized two ready-to-use car bombs"<sup>694</sup>, "the engineering units dismantled explosive devices"<sup>695</sup> (15 times). These phrases suggest that the Syrian army and security personnel are on the alert, spreading everywhere in order to provide security and safety to the people. During the Syrian crisis, there were many explosions which caused a state of fear and terror for the Syrians. The statements Al-Manar adopted, in this concern, create a mental image of the enormous efforts exerted by the security personnel to avoid more explosions to happen.

"The Syrian forces raided the dens of the armed people"<sup>696</sup> (5 times). The word 'den' suggests that the armed opposition is nothing more than gangs because in Arabic it stands for suspect caves, bases, haunts or dwellings where lawbreakers reside. The word 'den' is used for animal habitats as well. So, the channel indirectly likens the armed opposition to animals. Despite the several meanings of the word "den", the socially common meaning of the word is the animal's habitat. I

<sup>688</sup> "قضى الجيش على عدد من المسلحين"، "الأمن يقتل مسلحين"

<sup>689</sup> "الجيش استولى على كميات كبيرة من الأسلحة و الذخائر المتنوعة"

<sup>690</sup> 12 October 2011.

<sup>691</sup> "القوات السورية أوقفت سيارتين محملتين بالسلاح و المتفجرات و المناظير الليلية، و بعد الكشف عن المضبوطات تبين أن مصدرها إسرائيلي و تشمل رشاشات من نوع عوزي الإسرائيلي و هي قادمة من لبنان."

<sup>692</sup> 12 October 2011, 29 October 2011. "سورية أوقفت شحنة أسلحة مصدرها إسرائيل."

<sup>693</sup> 12 October 2011. "سورية أوقفت شحنة أسلحة"

<sup>694</sup> 26 August 2012. "سوريا عثرت على مراكز تصنيع أسلحة"

<sup>695</sup> "قوات الأمن ضبطت سيارتين مخففتين معدتين للتفجير". 04 September 2012.

<sup>696</sup> "وحدات الهندسة فككت عبوات ناسفة"

<sup>697</sup> "داهمت القوات السورية أوكر المصلحين"

think that employing the socially prevailing meaning of words would be an important tool in the psychological war.

Al-Manar portrayed that the security forces discovered a factory for manufacturing explosive devices or bases of the armed people under the ground. This depicting suggests that the security forces spread, chase and eliminate the armed people everywhere even meters under the ground.

"The army sterilized regions of the armed people"<sup>697</sup> (7 times). The verb 'sterilize' is one of the most prominent verbs Al-Manar adopted to describe the government actions towards the opposition. This is a metonymy that the armed people are germs, impure and filthy and that the army's task is purifying the country from their impurity and corruption. "And in Damascus, the army was able, with the support of the people, to sterilize Alhajar Alaswad."<sup>698</sup> This is a signifier of the collaboration between the army and the people and unanimity of views about the impurity of the armed opposition.

"Strangle-holding on the armed people"<sup>699</sup> (8 times), is an indication of the Syrian army's efforts to prevent all kinds of supply from reaching the armed opposition. The purpose of this significance is retorting to the propaganda that shows that the regime besieging the unarmed civilians; that is, the implicit intention is stating that the regime is besieging the armed people in order to eliminate them, not besieging the unarmed people. To support this idea, Al-Manar many times mentioned that the government forces are lifting the blockade of the cities, which means that it is the armed people who are besieging the civilians and assaulting them.

"Qualitative operation"<sup>700</sup>, "Clean operation"<sup>701</sup>, "Quick operation"<sup>702</sup>. Al-Manar employed these phrases to indicate that the armed forces try hard to avoid harming the civilians or destroying the buildings during their chasing of the armed people and raiding their bases.

During 2011 and 2012, Al-Manar rarely used words which indicate that the regime bombards with canons or missiles. It concentrated more on words of lesser magnitude such as: raided, arrested, confiscated weapons, stopped the infiltration of terrorists, and so on. "Under chasing the armed groups, the Syrian army launched deliberate airstrikes on the centers of the militants in Ras Alain."<sup>703</sup> The channel employed the phrase: "deliberate airstrikes."<sup>704</sup> which is an implicit signifier that the army does not bombard the civilians.

In the second half of 2012 and in 2013, the word "bombing" was mentioned, but in a context through which the channel tried to show the superiority of the Syrian army over the armed people,

697 "الجيش طهر مناطق من المسلحين"

698 28 July 2012. "و في دمشق تمكن الجيش السوري بمساندة الأهالي من تطهير الحجر الأسود"

699 "تضييق الخناق على المسلحين"

700 23 December 2012. "عملية نوعية"

701 20 September 2012. "عملية نظيفة"

702 19 June 2013. "عملية سريعة"

703 14 November 2012. "و في إطار ملاحقة المجموعات المسلحة شن الجيش السوري ضربات جوية مدروسة على مراكز المسلحين في رأس العين"

704 14 November 2012. "ضربات جوية مدروسة"

especially in the second half of that year – id est, after the appearance of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS). "Days of massive bombing on the gunmen"<sup>705</sup>, "The army bombards the terrorists' strongholds"<sup>706</sup>, "The army bombards for the fourth day in a row."<sup>707</sup>

The news discourse changed in 2013, especially in the second half. In 2011 and 2012, the general description of the martial activities, away from mentioning the details, was the general characteristic of the discourse. For instance, "the army chased the remnants of the militants"<sup>708</sup>, "The armed forces have clashed with the terrorist groups"<sup>709</sup> (7 times). In 2013, however, the discourse included further war details; it contained details of the mechanism of the Syrian armed forces: "In a quick operation, and from many axes, the Syrian army entered it opening gaps in the front lines of the armed groups"<sup>710</sup>, "The second stage was entering and penetrating the elite units of the Syrian army's infantry which controlled and firmly held those blocks and buildings. The most prominent axes of clash were from the direction of Daraa road, the railway and Albuwaida town south of Sbeina, but the most violent one was near the glass factory"<sup>711</sup>, "military sources told Al-Manar channel that the Syrian army concentrates its operations on closing all the gaps in the broad squares which lead to the depth of Damascus Suburb; reinforcing, thereby, the advance of its forces and cutting off the ways of communication between the armed groups."<sup>712</sup>

This change of discourse reflects Al-Manar's editorial policy's keeping pace with the reality in the war field in Syria; since after Al-Nusra Front and ISIS entered the battle field, Al-Manar and the pro-regime channels had to change their discourse to become a warlike one and an extension of the martial weapons.

"Thwarting attempted infiltration of terrorists into the Syrian land"<sup>713</sup> (9 times) is one of the most prominent actions of the regime in 2013. This is a signifier that Syria is violated by mercenaries who come from all over the world to fight the Syrian state. Meanwhile, many channels used to refuse and did not admit the existence of militants who came from outside Syria to combat against the regime<sup>714</sup>. Therefore, this piece of news appeared repeatedly and frequently as an attempt to assure the regime's propaganda stating that the armed opposition is not nationalist. In other words, the opposition is not Syrian but mercenaries executing agendas within a universal conspiracy.

705 08 August 2012. "أيام من القصف المكثف على المسلحين"

706 08 August 2012, 07 November 2013. "الجيش يقصف معقل الإرهابيين"

707 14 November 2012. "الجيش يقصف لليوم الرابع على التوالي"

708 26 August 2012, 26 October 2012. "الجيش لاحق ظول المسلحين"

709 "القوات المسلحة اشتبكت مع المجموعات الإرهابية"

710 19 June 2013. "بعملية سريعة و من عدة محاور دخلها الجيش السوري فاتحا ثغرات في الخطوط الأولى للمجموعات المسلحة"

711 17 November 2013.

"المرحلة الثانية كانت دخول و تغلغل وحدات النخبة من المشاة في الجيش السوري التي سيطرت و ثبتت تلك الكتل و الأبنية. أبرز محاور الاشتباك كانت من جهة طريق درعا و سكة القطار و بلدة البويضة جنوب السبيينة أما أعنفها و أشدها فكان عند معمل الزجاج".

712 02 September 2013.

"مصادر عسكرية ذكرت لقناة المنار أن الجيش السوري يركز عملياته على سد كافة الثغرات في السلاحات الواسعة المؤدية إلى عمق الريف الدمشقي معززا بذلك تقدم قواته وضاربا سبل التواصل بين الجماعات المسلحة".

713 "إحباط محاولات تسلل الإرهابيين إلى الأراضي السورية"

714 The researcher's notice through daily follow-up of many channels.

After every victory of the Syrian government army and its retrieving some regions, Al-Manar used to highlight the soldiers' activities in the retrieved regions such as demining operations, disabling bombs, combing buildings, searching and examining for remnants of the armed opposition who either were killed during the battles or ran away to other places. This presentation suggests how heavy the responsibility of the Syrian forces is; their task is not only restricted to fighting the militants, but they also take all necessary steps so as to ensure the safety of the civilian citizens.

"The engineering personnel in the Syrian army discovered explosive materials inside the tea and food packs. The armed people emptied them and filled them with explosive materials which can kill a person and cause substantial material damage in a place when pulled or pressed."<sup>715</sup>

Al-Manar's methods varied concerning presenting the numbers and the identities of those whom the government arrested or killed. The channel mostly talked in general without mentioning the names of the armed people. However, sometimes it mentioned details of the detainees or killed ones, their names, their residence places and so on. This method is useful when the mentioned persons play an important role on the ground. It is also useful in showing the credibility of the channel as the recipients feel that they are given definite names, which may make it possible to make sure of the credibility of information. As for the numbers of the murdered and detainees, Al-Manar mostly did not mention them: "The army killed a number of militants"<sup>716</sup> (40 times). This method leaves the recipient's imagination free. The pro-regime person may feel or hopes that the number of the murdered gunmen is big. Other times, Al-Manar mentioned a definite number of those who were detained or murdered. From 2011 to the middle of 2012, the numbers of murdered militants were not as big as they were mentioned on the screens of other channels – those which portrayed that the Syrian army daily kills hundreds of opponents whether they are armed or civilians. Al-Manar may mention that the army murdered one or two gunmen. The number might rise to five or a little more. This method helps to make the crisis of lesser magnitude and make the recipient feel that the situation is under the control of the Syrian state.

However, in the second half of 2012 and during 2013, the numbers of the murdered rose. Al-Manar may declare that the outcome of one day's murdered people reached tens of militants. This indicates that the channel is no more careful to lessen the magnitude of the number of the murdered opponents. Declaring the number of these murdered is important for the psychological war at that time. In addition, Al-Manar highlighted the coming of thousands of *takfiri* mercenaries to fight in Syria. So, daring to mention large numbers of the armed murdered people no longer causes embarrassment for the channel and the Syrian regime.

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715 29 June 2013.

"عناصر الهندسة في الجيش السوري عثروا على مواد متفجرة داخل علب الشاي و المواد الغذائية، حيث قام المسلحون بإفراغ محتوياتها ووضعوا مواد متفجرة مطحونة داخلها، و هي قادرة على قتل شخص و إحداث أضرار مادية كبيرة في المكان عن طريق السحب أو الضغط".

716 "الجيش قتل عددا من المسلحين"

Concerning the numbers of the detainees, Al-Manar adopted one method which is talking about those who were being arrested during one day. "The army seized 146 combatants"<sup>717</sup>, "The security personnel chased the terrorists and detained a number of them"<sup>718</sup> i.e. Al-Manar did not mention the total number of the detainees nor did it mention the number during a time interval which could be two or three months from the beginning of the crisis till the date of the studied report; the channel never mentioned how many militants the Syrian prisons keep. This method suggests that the armed forces are doing their duty by detaining the gunmen; eventually, this approach helps raise the morale of the pro-regime people. This method also retorts to the magnifying method which the opponent channels employ through mentioning huge numbers of the detained opponents.

As for the consequences of the regime's actions against the armed opposition, Al-Manar many times left the recipient's imagination free. Strictly speaking, it did not mention the exact losses of the armed people, but assured its huge magnitude. "The armed forces caused the combatants heavy losses", "The army caused heavy losses"<sup>719</sup> (15 times).

The images of the government soldiers were mostly taken by media personnel, whether those of Al-Manar or those of the pro-regime Syrian channels. These images were mostly clear; the cadre moves comfortably and calmly (not shaken), accompanied by the voice tones of the media personnel which suggest that things were still under control.

## 6.2. The Clashes

Concerning the clashes between the regime's forces and the armed opposition, Al-Manar adopted several methods for selecting its words and forming its sentences. First, the regime should be the subject of the sentence: "The army clashed with the armed group"<sup>720</sup> (8 times), "The armed forces engaged in battles with the militants"<sup>721</sup> (7 times), "The specialized authorities clashed with a group of the terrorist people"<sup>722</sup> (4 times). This method suggests that all things are still under the control of the Syrian government. It also implicitly suggests the martial superiority of the regime over the opposition.

Second, selecting phrases which suggest that the regime and the armed opposition are subjects of the sentence: "Violent battles are taking place"<sup>723</sup>, "Clashes happened"<sup>724</sup> (6 times), "Exchanging firing"<sup>725</sup> (4 times), "An armed clash took place"<sup>726</sup> (4 times). During narrating these phrases, Al-Manar's media personnel used a voice tone which suggests that the armed opposition

717 01 May 2011. "الجيش ألقى القبض على 146 مسلحاً"

718 04 September 2011, 27 November 2011. "لاحق الأمن الإرهابيين و اعتقل عددا منهم"

719 "القوات المسلحة كبتت المسلحين خسائر فادحة"، "أوقع الجيش خسائر فادحة"

720 "الجيش اشتبك مع المجموعة المسلحة"

721 "القوات المسلحة خاضت معارك مع المسلحين"

722 "الجهات المختصة اشتبكت من مجموعات إرهابية مسلحة"

723 14 November 2012. "تدور معارك عنيفة"

724 "وقعت معارك"

725 "تبادل إطلاق النار"

726 "حصل اشتباك مسلح"

is not as strong as the Syrian army. This supports sustaining raising the morale of the soldiers and the pro-regime civilians. At the same time, these phrases are useful for giving the justification for the regime's martial actions; the armed opposition engages into battles with the regime and murders its personnel, so the military forces have to persevere martially until they completely eliminate saboteurs.

"Violent clashes are taking place in the quarters of Aleppo in a decisive battle to retrieve what the armed groups seized"<sup>727</sup>. This method mitigates of the fall of some regions under the opposition's control. So, when Al-Manar says: "a decisive battle to retrieve what the armed groups seized"<sup>728</sup>, the recipients' minds would move towards the offensive characteristic of the regime forces' actions more than moving towards the opposition's victories 'seizing regions'. This may lead to a feeling of a close victory of the regime's forces.

The voice tone of the media personnel supports the verbal structure to give an impression of a close victory. "The field data indicate the close declaration of controlling Saif AlDawla Quarter"<sup>729</sup>, "The Syrian army gains more regions from the militants."<sup>730</sup> This verbal structure absents the truth of the armed opposition's control on these regions previously – i.e. retrieving some regions by the Syrian army implicitly means that it previously lost them. This method is useful as a means of the psychological war in order to sustain high morale.

"Violent battles are taking place, but the army is realizing advances."<sup>731</sup> Many times, Al-Manar linked the retrieval of some regions by the government forces and continuing the clashes with the armed people. This method creates a balance between raising the morale and not denying the existence of militants whom the Syrian state has to eliminate. In other words, this method balances between the regime supporters' emotion which is in need of self-confidence and the feeling of the ability of gaining victory on the one hand, and the mind and logic of these supporters who live the reality of the crisis and suffer from its difficulties on the other hand. In plain English, the exaggeration in introducing the achievements of the army might lead to losing the confidence of the recipient in the channel's credibility.

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727 28 July 2012. "اشتباكات عنيفة تدور في أحياء حلب في معركة حاسمة لاستعادة الجيش ما استولت عليه المجموعات المسلحة"

728 28 July 2012. "معركة حاسمة لاستعادة ما استولت عليه المجموعات المسلحة"

729 21 August 2012. "المعطيات الميدانية تشير إلى قرب إعلان السيطرة على حي سيف الدولة"

730 29 September 2012. "الجيش السوري يكسب المزيد من مناطق المسلحين"

731 14 November 2012. "معارك عنيفة تدور لكن الجيش يُحقق تقدماً"

(11)



The Syrian army's tanks during a talk about its progress in the battles. Due to the news context, the tank seems as a symbol of safety.<sup>732</sup>

"Clashes took place between the regime's forces and an armed group who assaulted civilians and private properties." <sup>733</sup> The channel always linked between the battles and the assaults of the militants. This shows that the regime's motive to fight battles is protecting the civilians. This sort of sentence shows the desire of Al-Manar to face the opposition's propaganda about the assaults of the government forces on the unarmed citizens. It introduces the regime as the hero who frees the detainees from the grip of the armed terrorists.

Third, the gunmen should be the subject of the sentence: "A group of terrorists clashed with the order-keeping personnel."<sup>734</sup> Al-Manar adopted this method when it wanted to introduce the government forces as a victim.

### **6.3. The Attitudes of Al-Manar's Media Personnel towards the Actions of the Regime against the Armed Opposition**

In addition to the news selectivity, there are other ways which show the attitudes of Al-Manar's journalists towards the government martial movements. Some words (verbs) indicate the channel's satisfaction and relief about all the movements of the Syrian army: succeeded, was able, could, advanced, attained, freed.

The second way: the journalist accompanies the army in many details during and after the battles – after the army retrieves regions. The journalist gets involved among the government fighters, covers their martial activities and explains the events in a voice tone which is confident of the victory of the Arab Syrian army.

<sup>732</sup> 10 June 2011

<sup>733</sup> 23 December 2012. "اشتباكات دارت بين القوات النظامية ومجموعة مسلحة اعتدت على مدنيين وممتلكات خاصة".

<sup>734</sup> 01 May 2011, 04 September 2011. "اشتبهت مجموعة من الإرهابيين مع عناصر حفظ النظام".



(12)



Al-Manar's correspondents are engaged with the soldiers of the Syrian army.<sup>735</sup>

"Freeing the regions"<sup>736</sup> (5 times), this phrase implicitly signifies that the armed opposition is considered an occupation. This means that, there is a connection between the characteristics of the opposition and those of Israel, which is considered a brutal occupier who must be eliminated to free Palestine and the Golan Heights from it. This linkage makes of the regime's activities against the armed people freeing and heroic deeds. Murdering, bombarding and all means of warfare become not only justified, but also preferred.

"Meanwhile, the army forces are deployed towards another region, and we can see some regions being secured. We face some armed groups which were hiding in a number of regions."<sup>737</sup> The journalists used the pronoun 'We' while they were accompanying the Syrian soldiers –We face, We find, We see. This is a significance of the unity of goals and attitudes of the Syrian army and Al-Manar channel. It is also a signifier that the activity of Al-Manar's media men is an extension of the Syrian martial activity; through them, the world can see a different image of what is going on in Syria, and through them the regime defies the media institutions which are trying to overthrow it.

(13)



Al-Manar's correspondent with a Syrian army personnel watching the events with the binoculars.<sup>738</sup>

735 02 September 2012.

736 "تحرير المناطق"

737 20 September 2012. "في هذه الأثناء تنتشر قوى الجيش باتجاه منطقة أخرى، و نرى تأمين بعض المناطق، نواجه بعض المجموعات المسلحة التي ما زالت تختبئ في عدد من المناطق."

738 06 August 2013.

No signs of fear of the gunmen appeared on the faces of Al-Manar's media personnel during accompanying the government soldiers in the battles. This is an implicit message suggesting absolute confidence of victory, and of the power of the army and its ability to deal with the terrorist groups. This is also a message that the Syrian armed forces and Al-Manar's media men are right and that they are struggling in the cause of the homeland and the people.

The voice tones of the correspondents suggest steadiness. In most times they did not talk quickly even in the battlefields. This is an important method to sustain the high morale of the recipient. When they talked quickly and enthusiastically, it was for assuring the army's victories.

"Al-Manar is in the Syrian village of Rabla in the suburb of Alquseir"<sup>739</sup>, "Al-Manar's camera goes along with the Syrian army in Darayya in Damascus Suburb"<sup>740</sup>, "Al-Manar's camera is in the heart of the city of Darayya in Damascus Suburb"<sup>741</sup>, "Al-Manar enters the hiding places of the armed people in Alquseir"<sup>742</sup> These are implicit messages which mean that Al-Manar's news are from the ground, from the field (credibility) and that the control of the Syrian army on the regions is a fact; it is not a lie as the opposing channels allege.

(14)



The journalist investigates the places and leftovers of the opposition after their leaving the place as a result of the Syrian army's control on it.<sup>743</sup>

Al-Manar's correspondents did not glorify the regime or its martial activities with direct words or characteristics. For example: the heroic army, the militant, the brave, the great, the steadfast. They rather employed implicit glorification through talking about: the difficulty of fighting battles in the narrow lanes, the positioning of the armed people everywhere even under the ground and in tunnels, the spread of many explosive devices and to-be-used bombs, and so on. The goal of this presentation is glorifying the Syrian army's steadfastness and its ability to tackle the war in such an accurate way that it can avoid causing any injuries on the side of the civilians. At the same time, it can eliminate the terrorists and free the lands.

<sup>739</sup> 28 October 2012. "المنار في قرية ريلة السورية بريف القصير"

<sup>740</sup> 05 December 2012. "كاميرا المنار تواكب الجيش السوري في داريا بريف دمشق"

<sup>741</sup> 05 April 2013. "كاميرا المنار في قلب مدينة داريا بريف دمشق"

<sup>742</sup> 29 May 2013. "المنار تدخل مخاض مسلحين في القصير"

<sup>743</sup> 12 May 2013.

Another way of indirect glorification of the Syrian army is as follows: the journalist accompanies the soldiers and officers after their freeing of an area, and talks only about the armed people: the sites from which they ran away, the explosive devices they left, the tunnels which they booby-trapped, their slogans which filled the walls and which have *takfiri* significances, the manual manufactures of weapons, and so on. This suggests that the Syrian government army is greater than being praised directly with words. The army does not care for glorification and praise. It is devoted for protecting the people and its goal is not boasting of the achievements. This method draws the attention of the recipient to the danger of the armed groups, and, eventually, assuring that there is a real justification for all the government martial activities. With this method, Al-Manar confronts all the channels which portray the Syrian army as a murderer of the people.

Here are some excerpts of the correspondents' comments during accompanying the soldiers of the Syrian army: "We are advancing further in the quarters. Here, the devastation talks about the battles among the houses and the walls. It is the day of roving among the centers of the armed groups. This is a center for manufacturing the explosive devices, and these are detonators and equipment which their owners left behind hastily after the army entered the area."<sup>744</sup>

"Military sources assured Al-Manar that large numbers of armed groups and Al-Nusra front are being besieged in Albahdaliya area and there are calls for surrender as the military ring is tight, the strikes are dense and the armed people's losses are very heavy there. Striking their centers and leadership led them to become dispersed and lost."<sup>745</sup>

"And in order to document the practices of the armed groups in the area, Al-Manar's camera accompanied the Syrian army and roved the factories of tractors, cables and batteries which witnessed systematic destruction; the machines and equipment were stolen by the armed people."<sup>746</sup>

"And moving into the tense quarters in Deir Ezzor, the finger never leaves the trigger in facing the armed groups the majority of whom belong to organizations which are Al-Qaida affiliated as the signs which they left behind them show. Al-Manar's camera accompanied the military units during their advance towards the strongholds of the armed people on more than one axis among which an operation of breaking into a building where the so-called Jundulaziz Battalion entrenched. According to the accompanying sources, the advance of the army is opening the way to send the armed people away."<sup>747</sup>

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744 29 May 2013.

"نتقدم أكثر داخل الأحياء، هنا الخراب يتحدث عن معارك بين البيوت والأسوار، إنه يوم التجول في مقرات المجموعات المسلحة، مقر لصناعة العبوات الناسفة، صواعق وعتاد تركها أصحابها على عجل بعد دخول الجيش إلى المنطقة".

745 19 June 2013.

"مصادر عسكرية أكدت للمنا أن أعداد من المجموعات المسلحة وجبهة النصرة محاصرة في منطقة البعلية وهناك دعوات للاستسلام، فالطوق العسكري محكما عليهم والضربات مكثفة وخسائر المسلحين كبيرة فيها. فإن ضرب مراكزهم وقياداتهم أدى لتشتتهم وضباعهم".

746 21 November 2013.

"و لتوثيق ممارسات الجماعات المسلحة في المنطقة، كاميرا المنار رافقت الجيش السوري و جالت على معامل الجارات والكابلات والبطاريات التي شهدت دمارا منهجا و تمت سرقة الآلات و المعدات من قبل المسلحين".

747 16 September 2013.

"و بالانتقال إلى الأحياء المتوترة بمدينة دير الزور هنا اليد لا تفارق الزناد بمواجهة جماعات مسلحة، ينتمي أغلبها إلى تنظيمات تابعة للقاعدة كما تظهر الآثار التي خلفتها. كاميرا المنار رافقت الوحدات العسكرية خلال تقدمها تجاه معقل المسلحين على أكثر من محور، بينها عملية اقتحام مبنى كانت تتحصن فيه ما يسمى كتيبة جند العزير. ووفق مصادر مواكبة فإن التقدم الجديد للجيش يفتح الطريق لإبعاد المسلحين".

"The high fighting abilities of the Syrian army."<sup>748</sup> This is a direct description of the army's power. This type of praise was not an apparent characteristic of Al-Manar's discourse.

## **7. The Weapons Used by the Government Forces**

In 2011 and 2012, Al-Manar accidentally mentioned the sort of weapons. This happened within contexts that contain implicit goals and signifiers. For example, the channel mentions that the army sent helicopters to evacuate the injured or to save the besieged police personnel, which is an indirect signification that the army does not use its helicopters to bombard the Syrian people. Rather, they are victims of the militants. Al-Manar may also state that the tanks and the soldier carriers have gone back to the barracks, which is a significance of the end of martial activity and of the credibility of the army which has taken its weapons back immediately after the end of its tasks. "The Syrian forces employ the helicopters to monitor the locations of the armed people"<sup>749</sup> is a significance of the limitedness of the goals of the Syrian army in using the Air Force. This Force is only used for monitoring the locations of the terrorist groups, not for bombarding.

The army's weapons were also mentioned in quotations from the opposition sources. As when a leader of the opposition admits the advance of units of the government army and the deployment of tanks and snipers to prevent reinforcements from reaching the gunmen. The purpose of mentioning the weapons is not the weapons themselves. In other words, Al-Manar does not try to clarify the kinds of the weapons which the regime employs, but it wants to prove that the army is advancing, controlling, and reinforcing its forces. The effect of this information becomes stronger when the enemy sources state it.

In 2013, Al-Manar few times mentioned the Syrian army's usage of cannons against the strongholds of the armed people, the regions which provide them and those where they withdraw. However, the channel transmitted images of the government tanks and automatic machine guns during the shooting operations. The Syrian military warplanes were mentioned in the context of the army's targeting the leaders of the armed opposition. This is an implicit message which suggests that the government army is very accurate, careful and cautious not to cause the civilians any material or human losses. The army only targets specific points.

Al-Manar utterly denied that the regime launched chemical missiles against its people.

## **8. Regional Icons**

The numbers of the regions mentioned in the reports have different indications. Sometimes, Al-Manar concentrated on one governorate or city and talked about security and martial events taking

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<sup>748</sup> 07 November 2013. "القدرات القتالية للجيش السوري".

<sup>749</sup> 01 August 2012. "القوات السورية تستعين بال مروحية العسكرية لرصد أماكن المسلحين".

place in it. This method narrows the crisis cadre and makes it seem restricted to limited regional hot points. Eventually, this method suggests to the recipient that things are still under the state's control. The second method is Al-Manar's mentioning of a group of governorates and cities, but with a medium voice rhythm which does not suggest tension and worry. Most often, a number of cities that does not exceed four or five was mentioned. The purpose was highlighting the victories of the Syrian army in many Syrian regions or showing the assaults of opposition fighters on Syrian citizens in different governorates. This is an implicit message which indicates that the armed opposition is the enemy of all the slices of the Syrian people. Mentioning many cities in the context of showing the military action of the Syrian Arab army suggests that Syria is still under the grip of the regime, and that the army is able to follow things up and control the situation from the north to the south of Syria and from the east to the west.

Mentioning a group of quarters of a city or a governorate is another method Al-Manar adopted. For instance, Al-Manar talked about the advance of the Syrian army in the quarters of Al-Sakhour, Al-Sukkari, and Salahuddin in Aleppo. This method suggests that the armed Syrian forces are realizing many victories, but it simultaneously suggests the limitedness of the Syrian crisis in definite hot points, not all over the Syrian governorates as the anti-regime channels used to portray.

"The city of Darayya in Damascus Suburb has come back to the lap of the homeland after the armed terrorist groups have horrified the people and committed massacres against them, and assaulted the public and private properties."<sup>750</sup> The word 'city' is feminine in Arabic. Al-Manar likened the city of Darayya to a she-baby which came back to the lap of her mother after the criminals had assaulted her. This is a significance of the strong tie between the people and the state, the citizens and the government.

"This area is one of a group of areas which have come back to the bosom of the Syrian state within an ongoing martial operation of the army for retrieving the rest of the villages."<sup>751</sup> The channel likened the Syrian state to the mother who does all she can to retrieve her children.

Al-Manar concentrated on mentioning the strategic importance of every area where the events take place, especially those which are being retrieved by the Syrian army. It is worth mentioning that the channel did not cite the strategic importance of the areas which the opposition seized, but it used to wait until the army retrieves them to talk about their importance. The channel also explained the importance of the areas where the government forces fought violent battles, but it always assured that the result would certainly be in favor of the Syrian army. This proves that Al-Manar did its best to raise the morale of all the supporters of the regime.

In the context of talking about the actions of the regime, all the areas which are cited in the report seem important. They can all be considered as icons which have different indications. An example is the city of Al-Quseir in the countryside of Homs. Al-Manar mentioned its strategic

<sup>750</sup> 26 August 2012. "عادت مدينة داريا في ريف دمشق إلى كنف الدولة بعد أن روعت المجموعات الإرهابية المسلحة الأهالي و ارتكبت بحقهم المجازر و اعتدت على الأملاك العامة و الخاصة"

<sup>751</sup> 06 August 2013. "هذه المنطقة من ضمن مجموعة مناطق تعود للدولة السورية في عملية عسكرية متواصلة للجيش لإعادة باقي القرى"

importance, which is an explicit significance. However, the town of Rabla<sup>752</sup>, which is a dependency of the governorate of Homs, has an implicit significance which indicates that the Christians suffer the control of the armed groups and that the Syrian army is the savior.

Al-Manar's sample included many Syrian governorates: Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Latakia, Deir Ezzor, Al-Raqqa and Hama and others. It also contained the names of many villages and small quarters, and each name has an importance and an indication. All the names are signifying semantic icons, but in varying degrees that is proportional to the size of the strategic importance of each area. Not distinguishing between the areas suggests that each hand spam of the Syrian land is holy and must be defended and protected.

## 9. Interviews with the Syrian Officers and Soldiers

Al-Manar's reports were rich in interviews with the government Officers and Soldiers. This makes it one of the distinguished channels which gets its information from sources which are not available for all the channels. It was not easy for the correspondents of the other television stations to interview officers of the Syrian army. During the interviews, the relation of Al-Manar's correspondents with the personnel of the Syrian army seemed firm and solid. Sometimes, Al-Manar recalled and adopted interviews held by the Syrian space channels with the officers and soldiers. Thereby, Al-Manar seems as an extension of the Syrian pro-government space channels.

In 2011 and the first half of 2012, the declarations of the soldiers were of a defensive characteristic. Their main purpose was proving the existence of terrorists who assault the state and citizens, and murder the soldiers. Al-Manar interviewed some wounded police and security personnel. They assured that they were doing their duty in sustaining security when they were shot from all sides by extremist terrorist people. They also assured that the terrorists were always cheering: 'Come to jihad!'. This is an implicit message indicating that the armed opposition is a sectarian and *takfiri* one.

One of the officers said: "In a short time, our armed forces were able to bring security and stability back. Now, once they have carried out their national task, they have gone back to their camps. It is a full departure of the army units from the city of Hama."<sup>753</sup> These are implicit messages suggesting that bringing security back does not take a long time (the army's strength) and that the martial operations of the armed forces is a national duty which must be maintained. The last significance of this declaration is confronting the opposition's propaganda about the intensification of the army's soldiers' deployment and about the escalation of the martial operations. Therefore, the officers reiterated that the military units finished their tasks and returned to their barracks.

<sup>752</sup> The majority of the residents of this town are Christians.

<sup>753</sup> 11 August 2011.

"استطاعت قواتنا المسلحة خلال فترة قصيرة أن تعيد الأمن و الاستقرار، و الآن بعد أن نكّدت مهمتها الوطنية، بعد أن نفذ أبناء القوات المسلحة واجبهـم خرجوا إلى معسكراتهم، هو خروج كامل لوحدات الجيش من مدينة حماه".

A wounded soldier as a result of an explosion said: "Someone who was wearing military uniform came among us. We looked at him. No one of us knew him. We noticed that he was puffed up. We decided to check his ID card, but he suddenly detonated himself." <sup>754</sup> This is an implicit message which indicates that the armed opposition people disguise themselves in the uniform of the government Syrian soldiers. That is to say, those whom the anti-regime channels present as government soldiers are in fact militants who wore the military uniform in order to accuse the army of murdering the people.

A Syrian officer standing by the corpse of an armed opponent said: "Mostly, this suicide bomber is not Syrian. His features seem to show that he is an African. There were four guards who detected the vehicle and shot the suicide bomber, and killed him before he could detonate the explosive. That was around three after noon. Here is the dead body of the suicide bomber. He put an explosive belt and had a remote control in his hand. If the explosion had happened, it would have killed more than 500 people." <sup>755</sup> This discourse is loaded with implied messages of a defensive character. They aim to justify the government martial operations; the army confronts terrorists who are not Syrian. They came to Syria to murder the Syrians and the duty of the army is to protect the people against these terrorists.

In the second half of 2012, the declarations of the soldiers and officers began to go in another direction which is the balance between the roles of the victim and the hero. Showing the confidence of the army in itself and in its ability to control the field situation was the prominent characteristic in the soldiers' discourse. A soldier talked to Al-Manar's correspondent: "The armed people are shooting the army personnel from the heart of the quarters." <sup>756</sup> Another soldier shouted from far away: "There are snipers who are shooting at us now" <sup>757</sup> which is a discourse that exposes the role of the victim. In the same report <sup>758</sup>, another soldier said: "The situation is under our control. *Inshallah*, things are under control. There is one sniper and when he's finished, it's over. God willing, the Lord of the world willing, victory is ours." This is a discourse which highlights the role of the heroic army which is confident of its abilities. Then another soldier shouted from a far place: "Come backwards! There are snipers with an RPG" <sup>759</sup> which is, again, a discourse exposing the role of the victim.

The justificatory characteristic dominated the declarations of the officers and soldiers during the second half of 2012. In other words, in order to meet the desire of the people who were terrified

<sup>754</sup> "إجاء واحد لابس عسكري فات لبيننا، طلعا عليه، ما منعرفه، شغنا منفوخ، رحنا لنطلب هويته فجر حاله." 27 April 2012.

<sup>755</sup> 12 May 2012.

<sup>756</sup> "على الأرجح الإنتحاري ليس سوريا، و يبدو من ملامحه أنه إفريقي، كان هناك أربعة حراس اكتشفوا الآلية و أطلقوا النار على الإنتحاري فأردوه قبل أن يقوم بتفجير العوة و ذلك قرابة الساعة الثالثة بعد الظهر. هذه جثة الإرهابي و كان يضع حزاما ناسفا و بيده جهاز تحكم و لو حصل هذا الانفجار لكان قتل أكثر من 500 شخص".

<sup>757</sup> 24 July 2012. "المسلحين عم يضربو من قلب الحارات على عناصر الجيش".

<sup>758</sup> "في قناصين هلا عم يرموا علينا".

<sup>759</sup> 24 July 2012. "الوضع تحت سيطرتنا، بإذن الله تحت السيطرة، في قناص بس انتهى القناص انتهت، بإذن الله بإذن رب العالمين النصر لنا".

<sup>759</sup> "ارجعوا لورا في قناصين و معهم آر بي جي".

by the armed terrorist groups, units of the army raid the dens of the armed people killing a large number of them and get deployed in more than a region.

Many of the declarations of the officers and soldiers were close to the dead bodies of the armed opponents some of which were burned, others were clear and well-featured. The government soldiers declared that they were corpses of gunmen from different nationalities. They were burnt by other combatants so that their real identity could not be discovered. These are implied messages whose purpose is justifying and legalizing all the regime's martial operations and also assuring the government propaganda stating that large numbers of mercenaries entered the Syrian land in order to overthrow the state which is resisting the Zionist enemy.

One of the Syrian army personnel said: "We found a den under the ground. After examining it, it turned out to be a manufacture for making explosives of terrorism, murder and crime in addition to making explosive devices and other materials of the means of torture and crime of the gangs which conspire against this country."<sup>760</sup>

The declarations of the officers also included information about the type and components of the weapons and ammunition which the gunmen left behind them in the areas that the Syrian army retrieved. They also contained information about the contents of the military sites the armed opponents left.

The discourse content of the officers changed radically during 2013. The features of the victim army were thoroughly absent and the role of the hero was dominant. "We are deterring these cowards. We are killing these cowardice traitors and decontaminating this land from terrorism"<sup>761</sup>. "And we won't stop striking until we recover all our lands from these armed people."<sup>762</sup>

Even the purpose of explaining the aggressive acts of the combatants was no longer showing the army as a victim. It was rather keeping justifying the government martial operations and showing the ability of the army to gain victory against a fierce and brutal enemy. This assures the compatibility between the desires of Al-Manar and that of the Syrian leadership to raise the morale of the soldiers and the supporters of the government. The content of Al-Manar's discourse was compatible to that of the military leaders throughout the three years.

An officer said: "The combatants entered these villages in general; I mean through its farms, orchards, houses, mosques, churches and synagogues. They have turned it into a military base. Moreover, they have changed this house into a field hospital. There are beds inside. There are shirts for them and it is a field hospital. They are changing Syria in general. Wherever they settle, whether in villages or orchards, they change them in spite of the civilians' reluctance of this. They drive the civilians away and turn their homes into hospitals, field hospitals, and military bases. However, *Inshallah*, with the determination of the Syrian Arab army, we will not allow this to

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760 26 August 2012.

"عثرنا على وكر تحت الأرض، من خلال تفتيشه تبين أنه هاد عبارة عن مصنع لتصنيع عبوات الإرهاب و القتل و الإجرام، بالإضافة إلى أجهزة تفجير و مواد أخرى من وسائل التعذيب و إجرام العصابات المتآمرة على هذا البلد".

761 06 August 2013. "نقوم برده هؤلاء الجبناء، نقوم بقتل هؤلاء الجبناء الخونة و نطهر هذه الأرض من الإرهاب"

762 06 August 2013. "ولن نتوقف عن توجيه الضربات إلى أن نستعيد كامل أراضينا من هؤلاء المسلحين"



happen at all."<sup>763</sup> These are messages the aims of which are only for justification; they are not for arousing pity on the soldiers.

One of the government soldiers said: "The city of Aqraba is situated in Damascus Suburb and lies exactly by the road of Damascus International Airport. The number of mercenaries was very large. Now, I can reassure you and all the families, I can tell you that from 85 to 90 percent of city of Aqraba is safe."<sup>764</sup> This declaration has a group of indications. Firstly, the army has regained an area of big strategic importance. This city is in the vicinity of the capital, Damascus; consequently, guaranteeing that the regime is not going to fall. Secondly, another significance that suggests the solid relationship between Al-Manar's correspondents and the Syrian army. The sentence: "I can reassure you" indicates that the correspondent is completely involved and that he is waiting for good news about the victory of the Syrian army. Thirdly, there is a signifier of the strong tie between the people and the armed forces. The sentence: "I can reassure you and all the families" is a significance of the people's absolute confidence in the army.

The interviews also included explanation of the details of the gunmen's plans as well as those of the government Syrian army. An officer stated: "Of course, the terrorists planned that the mercenaries of Jabhat Al-Nusra would enter the area from two axes, the first under Al Sakhour Bridge. The second axis, we let a part of them enter so that they might feel that they entered safely. We let them occupy the first building in each point. After that, we applied our plan. We besieged all the points they had taken up and opened fire on them from all directions."<sup>765</sup> In 2013, revealing the details of the martial operations became a means of psychological war, a means of raising the morale, and an evidence of the desire to involve the recipients in the events taking place on the ground so that the picture may become clearer to them from a different corner other than that which the anti-regime media stations are transmitting. "Of course, the ambushes are being performed on many stages the most important of which is following up and monitoring. The second one is preparing the region where we are going to perform the ambush with many means of fire, one of them are the explosives, others are the methods of fire which are available to us. The third one is the accurate execution on the suitable time so that we can perform a full fire force attack on the armed people in the area."<sup>766</sup>

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763 12 May 2013.

"المسلحين دخلوا القرى بشكل عام، يعني القرى من مزارعها، من بساتينها، من بيوتها، من مساجدها، من كنائسها، من معابدها، حولوها إلى قاعدة عسكرية، و أكثر شي هاد البيت محولينه إلى مشفى ميداني، في تخوت جوا، و في قصصان ال، و مشفى ميداني، عم يحولوا سوريا بشكل عام، وين ما عم يقعدوا بالضيق أو بساتين عم يحولوا، هالشي غصب عن المدنيين، عم يطلعوا المدنيين و يحولوها لمشافي، مشفى ميداني، عم يحولوا قاعدات عسكرية. بس نحن إن شاء الله بهمة الجيش العربي السوري مارح نسمح بهاد الشئ كله".

764 23 January 2013.

"مدينة عقربا هي مدينة واقعة في ريف دمشق و محاذية تماما لطريق مطار دمشق الدولي. أعداد المرتزقة كانت كبيرة جوا. و الآن أنا فيني طمنك و طمن الأهالي كليتين أنه فيني فلك 85 أو 90 بالمية عقربا مدينة أمنة".

765 22 June 2013.

"طبعا خطة الإرهابيين كانت دخول مرتزقة جبهة النصرة على المنطقة من محورين، محور رقم واحد هو من تحت جسر الصاخور، و المحور الثاني ... تركنا قسم ممن يغوت مشان يأمنوا أنو فاتوا و خليناهم ياخذو أول مبنى بكل نقطة، و بعدين قمنا بتطبيق الخطة تبعا أنه حاصرنا كل النقاط التي أخذوها و فتحنا عليهم النار من جميع الاتجاهات".

766 02 September 2013.

"طبعا الكمائن عم تكون عدة مراحل، أهم مرحلة فيها هي المتابعة و الرصد. ثانيا، تجهيز المنطقة التي سوف نقوم بالكمين بها بعدة وسائل نارية، منها متفجرات، منها الوسائط النارية المتوفرة بين أيدينا. ثالثا، التنفيذ الدقيق و بالوقت المناسب من أجل إطلاق كامل للقوة النارية على المسلحين المتواجدين في المنطقة".

The fighting soldiers appeared in the highest self-confidence. "We're going to face them with all our strength in spite of their continual futile sneaking which will certainly remain unsuccessful. The guys' morale is very high. I think they'll never be able to affect our morale or anything we have in us."<sup>767</sup>

The Syrian government army personnel used terms which indicate their trust in God, that God is with them and will certainly support them: "Thank God!"<sup>768</sup>, "God will victory is ours"<sup>769</sup>, "God willing."<sup>770</sup> The media focus on the soldiers' faith has an underlying goal which is confronting the opposition's propaganda that shows the Syrian armed forces as criminal, inhuman and immoral ones.

A group of the officers attacked the channels which transmit news in favor of the gunmen. "All what the biased news stations transmitted about the existence of the armed groups in the area of Suleiman Al-Halabi is untrue. We are still here and we are on the lookout against them wherever they exist."<sup>771</sup>

During the three years from 2011 to 2013, the content of the officers' discourse narrated many details of the assaults of the armed groups, yet it completely absented the fall of regions and cities under the control of these groups, which is a signifier of creating a balance between the emotional grooming and raising the morale.

## 10. Interviews with the Syrians Existing in Syria

Al-Manar's reports included a lot of interviews with the Syrian citizens who talked about their opinions of the regime's actions and those of its security and military forces.

### 10.1. The Male Citizens

The interviews contained different age groups, young and elderly.

During 2011 and 2012, the discourse of the male citizens pivoted around one notion: the army is the rescuer and savior of the people against the terrorists. "By God! Without the army, we'd have died. Now, you can hear and see the firing"<sup>772</sup>, "Thank God! The situation is O.K. and the army protected us. We were besieged in Dhibyaniya and they released us and brought us here to the hotel"<sup>773</sup>, "They'd have destroyed the world if the army hadn't come and protected us, by God, we'd

767 13 October 2013.

"رح نتصدالهن بكل ما نستطيع من قوة رغم استمرارن بالتسللات الفاشلة، أكيد رح تضل فاشلة، و مغويات الشباب كثير عالية، بعتمد مارح يقدرو ياثروا على مغوياتنا أو على أي شيء فينا".

768 11 August 2011. "الحمد لله"

769 24 July 2012. "بإذن الله النصر إلنا"

770 11 November 2013. "إن شاء الله/ بإذن الله"

771 22 June 2013. "كل ما بثته المحطات الإخبارية المغرضة عن وجود المجموعات المسلحة في منطقة سليمان الحلبي هو غير صحيح فنحن ما نزال هنا و نحن لهم بالمرصاد أينما وجدوا"

772 24 July 2012. "و الله لولا الجيش كنا متنا، هي أنت سمعان و شاييف إطلاق النار"

773 24 July 2012. "الوضع الحمد لله مزبوط، و الجيش النظامي حمانا، كنا محاصرين بالذبابية فكونا جابونا لهون عالفتنق"

have been nothing"<sup>774</sup>, "After the martial operation which the Arab Syrian army gratefully performed, safety and stability were back to the town of Rabla. Its residents are also doing their jobs again and things have become almost normal again."<sup>775</sup>.

Some citizens hid their faces, they justified that behavior saying that they were afraid that the combatants might chase them. The tones of their voices were high and sharp suggesting agitation. They expressed their gratitude to the Syrian army: "In the presence of God and the army (thanks to God and to the army) our sons are back."<sup>776</sup> This is a significance of the trust of the citizens in the protection of God and in the ethics of the Syrian army, its loyalty to its work, and its fully holding its national responsibilities.

Al-Manar's highlighting of the content of this popular discourse suggests that it has been for two years trying to disprove the opposition's propaganda which stated that the regime was killing its people.

The slogan: "May Allah protect the army", "May Allah compliment the army"<sup>777</sup> (4 times) was a popular desire that God may bless the Syrian army and its activities. "May God bless the army which helped us enter here!"<sup>778</sup> That is, we pray to God to bless this army which retrieved the region from the control of the terrorists and made it possible for us to return to our homes.

In 2013, the discourse of the males centered on the notion of: the confidence in the victory of the Syrian army and its ability to face terrorism and the universal conspiracy. "It's all false propaganda; they won't be able to do anything so long as the Syrian army is standing fast protecting the country. They won't be able to stain this immaculate land."<sup>779</sup> This is a signifier that the people disprove the opposition's propaganda about the victories which Arab and world channels promote.

The popular discourse also indicated the confidence of the Syrians in the inability of the international society – which conspires against Syria – to defeat the Syrian army and people who resist the Israeli occupation. The conspiracy will never overcome the will of the people who are confident of their wise leadership – Bashar Al-Assad.

## 10.2 Interviews with the Females

All the women Al-Manar interviewed were wearing *hijab* – Sunni *hijab* – which is a significance that their attitudes represent those of the Muslim Sunni sect. The interviews contained different age groups.

774 24 July 2012. "خربوا الدنيا لوما إجا الجيش و حمانا نحن الله و كيك و لا شي"

775 28 October 2012. "بعد العملية العسكرية التي نفذها الجيش العربي السوري مشكور عاد الأمن و الاستقرار لبلدة ربله و عادوا سكانها لمزاولة أعمالهم و الأمور عادت شبه طبيعية"

776 13 June 2011. "بوجود الله و بوجود الجيش رجعو و لادنا"

777 "الله يحمي الجيش"، "الله يحمي الجيش"

778 23 January 2013. "الله يحمي الجيش الي خلانا نفوت لهون"

779 22 June 2013. "كلها دعايات كاذبة، لن يستطيعوا طالما أن الجيش العربي السوري واقف حامي البلاد، لن يستطيعوا أن يدنسوا هذه الأرض الطاهرة"

Women expressed their gratitude to the army which saved them from the terrorists after they had lived a state of immense horror. "When we heard that the army came, we thanked God; I mean we are safe and free from worry and we are back"<sup>780</sup>, "We are grateful to the army because it came. Every week, we used to live an extremely enormous state of horror. Nobody sympathized with us; we were afraid of even getting out of our homes"<sup>781</sup>, "By God! Thank to their protection and the protection of God. May God protect this country."<sup>782</sup> Continuous mentioning of God and its protection of the people reflects part of the religious Islamic culture. Muslims believe that all what happens is an embodiment of God's will. Eventually, the survival of the people reflects God's desire to protect them. Permanent linking between the protection of the people by God and by the army, especially when mentioned by women, suggests that the citizens accept the army religiously. This image is a retort to what many channels promote stating that the Syrian army is a sectarian – Alawite – one which is discarded by the religious majority – namely, the Sunni sect. "Advance! May Allah protect you and bring victory to you by the honor of our master, Muhammad!"<sup>783</sup>, "May God protect this army!"<sup>784</sup> These are implied messages which blast the propaganda about the religious rejection of the army. The Sunni sect is praying for the army to gain victory under the leadership of the president – the Alawite. The prayers of the women for the army to gain victory were reiterated.

The women expressed their grief for the death of the soldiers of the Syrian army by severe sobbing and condemnation. They also expressed their love of president Al-Assad and their absolute acceptance of his personality: "There is no president like ours."<sup>785</sup>

In 2013, the confidence of females in the victory of the army on the militants and the universal conspiracy was prominent.

The channel showed the children cheering for the army which is a signifier of the credibility of the regime's propaganda concerning its protection of the civilians against the betrayal of the terrorists. It is also a counter propaganda against that of the opposition concerning killing the children by the Syrian army.

The relationship of the channel's correspondents with the Syrian citizens seemed strong, mostly having the domestic character. These correspondents seem as if they were brothers of the Syrian people holding their cause in media and confronting the opponent propagandas whose goal is destroying the country.

## 11. Who is Fighting by the Side of the Regime's forces?

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<sup>780</sup> 20 June 2011. "لما سمعنا الجيش إجا قلنا الحمد لله يعني نحن بأمان، و مطمئنين و رجعنا"

<sup>781</sup> 20 June 2011. "ممنونين من الجيش السوري إنه إجا، كنا كل جمعة نعيش بحالة رعب كبير كثير ما حدا كان يحسن فينا، كنا ما نسترجي نطلع أبدا برا البيوت"

<sup>782</sup> 24 July 2012. "و الله بحمايتهم و بحماية الله، الله يحفظ هالبلد"

<sup>783</sup> 20 September 2012. "روح الله يحميكن و ينصركن بجاه سيدنا محمد"

<sup>784</sup> 05 April 2013. "الله يحمي هالجيش"

<sup>785</sup> 28 July 2013. "مافي مثل رئيسنا"

Al-Manar did not mention anything about Iran and Hezbollah's interference in the Syrian crisis nor about their military participation and their support of the regime. The Syrian forces appeared able to manage things on their own without the need of any support or backing.

In 2013, Al-Manar talked about the necessity for the Syrian citizens to form popular committees to defend themselves. It presented this news as a significance of the cooperation and unity of the people in the face of the gunmen. However, the channel ignored that this news may represent an insult of the Syrian army because it indirectly indicates the inability of this army to protect all the people. "For self-defense and in order to defend their honor, the people formed popular committees to secure their villages and defend them. Their youths carried weapons as there was no substitute for them to ensure protection against the assaults of the armed people."<sup>786</sup>

## The Image of the Armed Opposition on Al-Manar's Channel

### 1. Labels

Al-Manar adopted the same labels which the pro-regime Syrian channels employed for the opposition armed people: gunmen (260 times), armed groups (198 times), criminal armed gangs (13 times), terrorist groups (75 times), *salafi* organizations (6 times), *takfiri* groups<sup>787</sup> (12 times), extremist groups (6 times), suicide bombers (9 times)<sup>788</sup>. These labels show the opposition as rogue elements against the state and people without dressing it a robe of prestige. This means that, Al-Manar did not label the armed opposition as 'army'. This method is very important in psychological war. Al-Manar did not pull the rogue character out of the opposition. On the contrary, it labeled it with names and characteristics which make the recipient feel that death is spreading everywhere in Syria. At the same time, Al-Manar tried to dwarf the opposition through not recognizing it as an army – legal organization. Sometimes, Al-Manar mentioned the names of brigades and battalions of the armed opposition, but only in specific contexts. For example, the death of the leader of a brigade, or in the context of terrorist practices such as slaughtering people with knives or shooting them dead. However, the most prominent contexts which included mentioning the names of the factions and brigades were during talking about the conflicts and the fighting between these groups. This means that, the contexts when Al-Manar mentioned the names of the armed factions and brigades mostly indicated the weakness of the opposition.

The name of Al-Qaida and the groups subordinate to this organization – Jabhat Al-Nusra – have appeared since 2011; i.e. since the start of the crisis. The Syrian street opinion was divided between

<sup>786</sup> 15 April 2013. "للدفاع عن النفس و العرض شكل الاهالي لجانا شعبية لتأمين قراهم و الدفاع عنها، و حمل شبايتها السلاح حيث لم يجدوا بديلا عنها لتوفير الحماية من هجمات المسلحين".

<sup>787</sup> 37 words are synonymous with the terms: extremists and takfiris.

<sup>788</sup> مسلحون، جماعات مسلحة، عصابات إجرامية مسلحة، مجموعات إرهابية، تنظيمات سلفية، مجموعات تكفيرية، المجموعات المتطرفة، انتحاريون.

believers of the existence of Al-Qaida in Syria and disbelievers who considered this as a part of the regime's propaganda to justify the martial brutal actions against the people<sup>789</sup>.

The Syrian channels and Al-Manar have insisted on the participation of Al-Qaida in killing the people, the security personnel and the army since 2011. This was proved later. In other words, Jabhat Al-Nusra and elements from Al-Qaida have openly become the most prominent anti-regime groups since 2012. Here, the question arises: was Al-Manar promoting an illusionary government propaganda which turned to be a fact later? Or was Al-Qaida truly one of the other responsible actors for what was happening in Syria?

In addition to Al-Qaida and Jabhat Al-Nusra, most of the brigades and battalions of the FSA, which were mentioned on Al-Manar's screen, had an Islamic – Sunni – characteristic: Islam Army, Jund Allah (the Soldiers of God), Al-Farouq Battalion, Khaled Ibn Al-Walid Brigade, Ahfad al-Rasoul Brigade (the Brigade of the Prophet's Grandchildren). These are significations of the *takfiri* tendency and religious fanaticism of the opposition and indications that there was no true popular revolution which aims at freedom and reform. This movement is rather a destructive wave which demolishes all those who do not accept its affiliation and doctrine.

"Most of the gunmen who attacked the villages belong to radical fundamentalist groups whose curriculum vitae preceded them in criminality"<sup>790</sup>, "The factions of the armed groups here are numerous, but their most prominent characteristic is radicalism."<sup>791</sup>

## 2. How Did the Channel Portray the Actions of the Armed Opposition?

The most remarkable labels which Al-Manar branded the armed opposition activities with were: "armed attacks"<sup>792</sup>, "brutal actions"<sup>793</sup>, "criminal action"<sup>794</sup> (6 times), and "terrorist action"<sup>795</sup> (8 times).

While a group of Arab channels were talking about the start of the Syrian revolution in the city of Daraa in March 2011, the discourse of Al-Manar was totally different: "Some infiltrating persons exploited the gathering of a number of citizens in the Governorate of Daraa al-Balad near Al-Omari Mosque on Friday afternoon, and caused chaos and riots which led to damages in the popular and private properties. They also damaged and burned a number of vehicles and public stores."<sup>796</sup> This discourse has a refutation characteristic of that of the other channels which were promoting demonstrating from Al-Omari Mosque in Daraa after Al-Jumaa (Friday) prayers. Al-

789 The researcher's notes who lived the crisis in 2011.

790 10 August 2013. "معظم المسلحين الذين هاجموا القرى ينتمون إلى جماعات أصولية متشددة سبقتها سيرتها الذاتية بالإجرام"

791 13 October 2013. "تتعدد فصائل المجموعات المسلحة هنا لكن يغلب عليها الشدّد"

792 13 April 2011, 27 April 2012. "الهجمات المسلحة"

793 08 June 2012. "أعمال وحشية"

794 "العمل الإجرامي"

795 "العمل الإرهابي"

796 19 March 2011.

"وكان بعض المندسين قد استغلوا تجمع عدد من المواطنين في محافظة درعا بالقرب من الجامع العمري بعد ظهر الجمعة، وعمدوا إلى إحداث فوضى وشغب ملحقين أضراراً بالملكيات العامة والخاصة، وقاموا بتعطيل وحرق عدد من السيارات والمحلات العامة".

Manar employed the term infiltrating persons to implicitly suggest that there were secret and hidden actors who managed the actions of the saboteurs who sought to create chaos and to incite the people against the government through committing illegal actions and attributing them to the Syrian security forces.

## 2.1. The Armed Opposition Actions against the Citizens

Al-Manar adopted a set of sentences describing the actions of armed groups: "Shot randomly"<sup>797</sup> is a signification whose implied purpose is justifying the existence of murdered civilians. "Horried the citizens"<sup>798</sup> (12 times) is an underlying signifier that the Syrians do not accept the opposition and the purpose is blasting the armed people's popularity which many channels promote. "Attacked the innocent civilians, especially women and children"<sup>799</sup>, which indicates that the armed groups murder the people without any reason, which is a significance of brutality. "Kidnapped the civilians"<sup>800</sup> (12 times), sometimes Al-Manar stated that the reason of kidnapping was the loyalty of people to the government. However, it mostly did not mention the reasons of kidnapping. It left the recipient free to imagine; some might imagine that the main cause is getting an amount of money in return for releasing the hostages; others might imagine that kidnapping has a sectarian basis. That is to say, all the kidnapped belong to religious minorities, especially, the Alawites. Imagining depends on the experience of the audience and the extent of their closeness and familiarity with the Syrian crisis.

Concerning killing the civilians, Al-Manar depicted that the armed groups did not only kill the people, but they also mutilate their corpses, cut them into pieces, burn them and throw them in rivers and sewers of the sanitation system. "Committing a massacre against safe citizens"<sup>801</sup> (5 times), "Massacres against humanity"<sup>802</sup> (13 times), "War crimes"<sup>803</sup> (11 times), "torturing people"<sup>804</sup> (10 times). These terms were used to denote the gravity of the armed opposition's criminality against the citizens.

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797 08 April 2011. "أطلقت النار عشوائياً"

798 "روعت الأهالي"

799 23 December 2011, 08 June 2012. Synonymous sentences with this sentence were repeated 61 times. "هاجمت المدنيين الأبرياء خاصة النساء و الأطفال"

800 "خطفت مدنيين"

801 "ارتكاب مجازر بحق مواطنين أمنين"

802 "مجازر بحق الإنسانية"

803 "جرائم حرب"

804 "التنكيل بالناس"

(15)



The opposition murders the civilians.<sup>805</sup>

"The armed people have executed most of the hostages whose majority are women and children"<sup>806</sup>, "The armed groups rape girls, then kill them and throw them in rivers."<sup>807</sup> This signifies the immorality of the armed opposition; according to the rules of war, captive people should be respected. This idea implies a sentimental enticement in favor of the people through mentioning the gender and age of the hostages – women and children.

Al-Manar showed that the armed opposition was slaughtering people with knives. It is a denotation of the militants' sadism whose thirst for blood is not quenched by modern arms. They, rather, resort to slaughtering in order to delight in the groans and the blood color of the victims.

The idea that the militants are targeting schools and killing the pupils and teachers was repeated 6 times. This is an implicit significance of the opposition's fighting against learning and their hostility of children's education on the basis of openness and accepting the other. In other words, the gunmen want specific schools where they teach their principles which are based on *takfirism* and hatred of the other.

Al-Manar portrayed that the terrorist groups implanted explosive devices in front of the entrances of mosques so that they exploded when the prayers get out after *Salat Al-Jumaa* (Friday prayers). This is an implied message the purpose of which is the absolute negation of the demonstrations after Friday prayer<sup>808</sup> and assuring that the regime does not assault the prayers. "The exit of the prayers from Zein Al-Abidin Mosque in Al-Midan was not normal; minutes after their performing Friday prayer an explosion boomed opposite the mosque."<sup>809</sup>

Al-Manar also depicted that the armed groups targeted the heavily populated places, which is a signifier of the desire to kill a big number of civilians. It also portrayed that these groups booby-trapped the quarters, houses, food stuff and so on, which is a denotation that death prevailed everywhere, death planted by the hand of treachery on every hand span of the Syrian land. "The armed people innovated other methods to cause a bigger damage in the residential buildings.

<sup>805</sup> 16 December 2012.

<sup>806</sup> 11 October 2013. Synonymous sentences were repeated twice. "المسلحون يعدمون معظم الرهائن الذين غالبيتهم من النساء و الأطفال"

<sup>807</sup> 13 June 2011. "المجموعات المسلحة تغتصب قتيات ثم تقتلهم و ترميهم في الأنهار"

<sup>808</sup> On the screens of the opponent channels, the year 2011 was characterized by the demonstrations of the opponents after serving the Friday prayers in a lot of Syrian regions.

<sup>809</sup> 27 April 2012. "لم يكن خروج المصلين من مسجد زين العابدين في حي الميدان عاديا، فبعد لحظات من أدائهم صلاة الجمعة دوى انفجار قبالة المسجد"



Sometimes they connect the mine to a gas cylinder and when the hidden mine is trodden the gas cylinder explodes. Other times, they connect it to a large number of explosive devices and other houses. The explosive devices may also be distributed in all the rooms so that more than one house can be exploded. In the same way, they use the gas cylinders to smuggle drugs arms and munitions."<sup>810</sup>

Al-Manar dared to mention a large number of murdered civilians only when it had solid evidence that the armed groups were responsible for the murder such as videos which show the murder operations or when it had declarations of officials of Human Rights Watch and so on. This avoidance of mentioning the numbers of victims suggests that the channel confronted the opponent propaganda concerning daily murders that may reach hundreds by the regime's forces.

The idea that the gunmen are killing the residents of the villages on a sectarian basis was repeated 10 times. This propaganda started as from the first months of the crisis and continued as a remarkable characteristic of Al-Manar's discourse. "Terrorism is again targeting quarters that are part of the randomly built areas where a lot of Alawites reside in the outskirts of Damascus. The purpose is, of course, provoking the sectarian strife (*fitna*) and deepening the social fracture in Syria."<sup>811</sup> This is an implied message denoting that the armed opposition fights the regime through assaulting the members of the Alawite sect which president Al-Assad belongs to. The opposition is religiously spiteful and tries to create hatred and malevolence between the Alawites and the Syrian Sunnis.

"They violated the Christian villages, destroyed and damaged the churches, robbed the contents, and defiled the Christian icons according to what the area's people narrated."<sup>812</sup> This is an indication of the admittance of the Christian sect of the opposition's sectarianism which does not tolerate any religion and any worship centers except those which suit their doctrines. "ISIS raise their flags on Al-Raqqa's churches"<sup>813</sup> is a significance that the revolution in Syria is one which abolishes the other, and eradicates all freedoms.

Al-Manar recalled a video from a source of the opposition's which shows the militants boasting of committing massacres. A group of these militants were cheering: 'God is the greatest! God is the greatest!' Then one of them appears saying: "The heroes and Mujahidin of Deir Ezzor assaulted and burned all the homes of *Shabbiha Raafidis*, the apostates who sold their religion for worldly pleasures."<sup>814</sup> The goal of this recall is highlighting the *takfiri* characteristic of the opposition

810 29 June 2013.

"ابتكر المسلحون أساليب أخرى لإحداث أضرار أكبر في الأبنية السكنية، فأحياناً كانوا يعملون على وصل اللغم بقارورة الغاز وعند الدوس على اللغم المخفي تنفجر القارورة. و يمكن أحياناً أن يكون موصلاً بعدد كبير من العبوات الناسفة و بيوت أخرى. أو توزع العبوات الناسفة في جميع الغرف بحيث يمكن تفجير أكثر من منزل. و بالطريقة ذاتها كان المسلحون يستخدمون أسطوانات الغاز لتفجير المخدرات و الأسلحة و الذخائر."

811 01 December 2012. "سوريا". "عائد الإرهاب استهداف أحياء من العشوائيات يسكنها الكثير من أبناء الطائفة العلوية على أطراف دمشق، و القصد طبعاً إثارة الفتنة الطائفية و تعميق الشرخ الاجتماعي في سوريا."

812 02 April 2013. "استباحو القرى المسيحية و هدموا و خربوا الكنيسة و سرقوا المحتويات و دنسوا الرموز المسيحية بحسب رواية أهالي المنطقة."

813 26 September 2013. "داعش ترفع رايته على كنائس الرقة"

814 12 June 2013. "أبطال و مجاهدين دير الزور قاموا باقتحام و حرق جميع بيوت الروافض الشيعة المرتنئين الذين باعوا دينهم بعرض الدنيا"

which believes in jihad against all those who oppose it in opinion and doctrine and which delights in killing 'in the cause of God'. It also highlights the agony of the Shiites whom the *takfiris* call '*Raafidis* and apostates from the religion of Allah'.

In the same video<sup>815</sup> one of the opposition's religious leaders boasts saying: "Today, we have slaughtered one of the disbelieving symbols {they killed a Shiite Imam}. We slaughtered him and his son as well"<sup>816</sup>. Then the cheers of the gunmen rise high: God is the greatest! God is the greatest! to indicate that they realized a great achievement. Al-Manar linked the sadism of the armed groups to the religious pretexts these groups used in order to justify their actions.

In the context of highlighting the *takfiri* character of the opposition, Al-Manar depicted that the armed groups also fight and murder the moderate Sunni sect who do not obey the orders of these groups. The murder operations included different gender and age groups: women, kids, young men, men. Al-Manar presented a group of videos which show field executions by firing squads performed by the armed groups against citizens who disobeyed their orders. Among these were women wearing *hijabs* from the Sunni sect. The images were accompanied by sad music, the purpose of which was sentimentalization in favor of the tortured civilians and feeding the popular rejection of the militants. "Al-Raqqa and Deir Ezzor have already witnessed spectacular murder operations in the street which aim at horrifying the citizens who have insisted on demanding stopping torture, detainment and execution which are performed pursuant to vague and fast measures."<sup>817</sup>

The channel recalled a video taken from the opposition's resources. It shows a kid using the sword to behead the kidnapped. The kid decapitates a man many times seen by militants chanting and cheering: God is the Greatest!<sup>818</sup>. This is a denotation of the murder and violence culture which the opposition men pass to the young generation.

(16)



A kid from the opposition beheads one of the Assad's supporters.<sup>819</sup>

<sup>815</sup> 12 June 2013.

<sup>816</sup> "اليوم نحرنا رمزا من رموز الكفر، نحرناه و نحرنا ولده معه"

<sup>817</sup> 20 June 2013. "سبق أن شهدت الرقة كذلك دير الزور عملية قتل استعراضية في الشارع بهدف ترهيب المواطنين الذين ما انفكوا يطالبون بوقف التنكيل و الاعتقالات و الإعدامات التي تتم وفق إجراءات سريعة و غير واضحة".

<sup>818</sup> 10 December 2012.

<sup>819</sup> 10 December 2012.

"Then, to conclude the bloody dramatic presentation {the execution of the civilians}, the murderers celebrate their achievement by throwing the dead bodies of the victims into one hole without leaving a tombstone on the grave. There are endless stories in Syria on the ground of *takfiri fatwas* which justify these practices."<sup>820</sup> Many times, the channel adopted the method of direct and explicit criticism of the opposition's actions, a criticism which denotes great discontentment with these behaviors. This discontentment has an implied goal which is assuring the legality of the regime's actions against the opposition.

"Wherever the armed groups exist in Syria, the ugliest images of murder and torture spread on the internet; the charge is predetermined: those who are not with us are against us."<sup>821</sup> This is a direct criticism of the opposition which boasts of its crimes through filming its murder operations and promoting them on the internet. The militants kill whosoever does not support them, which is an indication of the opposition's dictatorship which claims that it is fighting the regime in the cause of freedom.

"No sooner did the Syrians enjoy *Eid Al-Adha's* truce than a series of sudden bloody explosions stunned them. These explosions increased the bleeding of the innocent people and put the *Eid's* relative joy away from their hearts, and at stake was the truce."<sup>822</sup> This is an emotional enticement the aim of which is retorting to the opposition's propaganda concerning the disrespect of the government forces of the religious occasions. Al-Manar's defense of the civilians denotes that they are supporters of the regime. Al Manar portrayed that the militants are besieging cities during the month of Ramadan. This is an indication of the opposition's disrespect of the holiness of the month of Ramadan – the Holy Month.

"A reality where it is very easy to murder a human being without the least deliberation."<sup>823</sup> This is a significance of the brutality of the militants who kill people without any reason. The implied purpose of this is assuring that the only murderer of the people is the armed opposition, not the regime.

Al-Manar portrayed that the terrorist groups perform expulsion operations against the people, assault villages, attack the houses of the families and detain them, violate regions, and burn the commercial stores. Al-Manar's discourse contained the verbs: to attack, to assault and to violate in order to denote the illegality of any activity; the armed people violate assault and rob what they do not have a right in.

Pursuant to Al-Manar, not only do the militants assault the citizens, but they also shoot the humanistic delegations from the International Red Cross and the Syrian Red Crescent to prevent them from evacuating the citizens from the clash regions<sup>824</sup>.

<sup>820</sup> 20 June 2013. "و في ختام العرض المسرحي الدامي يحتفل القتلة بإنجازهم و تُرمى جثث الضحايا في حفرة واحدة من دون ترك شاهد على القبر. قصص لا تكاد تنتهي في سوريا على خلفية فتاوي تكفيرية تبرر هذه الممارسات"

<sup>821</sup> 14 November 2012. "أينما حُلَّت المجموعات المسلحة في سوريا، تنتشر على صفحات الانترنت أشنع صور التنكيل، طالما التهمة جاهزة: من ليس معنا فهو ضدنا."

<sup>822</sup> 26 October 2012. "لم يكذب السوريون بهدنة عيد الأضحى المبارك حتى باغتهم سلسلة تفجيرات دموية، زادت من نزيف دم الأبرياء و أبعدت فرحة العيد النسبية عن قلوبهم واضعة الهدنة على المحك."

<sup>823</sup> 20 June 2013. "واقع يسهل فيه قتل الإنسان من دون أدنى تروي"

<sup>824</sup> 22 June 2012.

Al-Manar did not cite the riots which are practiced by groups which exploit the lack of stability and security (groups which riot without having any political orientation). This suggests that only the opposition is responsible for all the chaos, devastation and destruction.

Under the title: "The Free Syrian Army; unlimited criminality"<sup>825</sup>, Al-Manar described the opposition:

"Frankenstein remained a distinguished character in the world of horror films until what is called the Free Syrian Army (FSA) appeared in Syria wearing the mask of revolution under which it hid ugly features, an open appetite for blood, and arts in criminality which people have neither experienced in an Arab Spring, Autumn, nor even Winter. These arts had a variety of forms: hanging, crushing under the cars, shooting, slaughtering on the roads, and throwing citizens alive down from high places. These things usually take place in the middle of the crowds, seen by the old and the young, accompanied by reiterating the phrase 'Praise be to Allah!' and cheering the phrase 'God is the Greatest!' The existing people take their cell phones out and start video documenting these moments of criminality, revenge, torture and madness. All this happens under the shade of the French Mandate's flag<sup>826</sup>. Undoubtedly, it is a revolution that draws its breath from the blood of the innocent and lives on sectarianism. We are going to present a number of video footages which show the face of the Free Syrian Army that wants to overthrow the president Bashar Al-Assad in order to rule the country with all this unlimited brutality, absurdity and criminality. Remark: the footages contain very hard scenes which children and weak-hearted people need not watch. Different liquidation operations: slaughtering a citizen on the road, throwing down mail workers in Aleppo from a building roof, and a brutal execution performed by a firing squad. If you want to ask about a new concept of freedom, you should only ask the elements of FSA who have their own special meaning which is the emancipation from the human, moral and religious rules and precepts."<sup>827</sup>

This quotation can sum up the attitude of Al-Manar's journalists towards the armed opposition. For them, FSA outdid the symbols of horror. The journalists mocked the goals and practices of the militants (the revolutionaries) with a sad voice tone which suggests the immenseness of the criminality of the opposition which claims the pursuit of freedom while it practices the ugliest forms of murder. This opposition cannot be the substitute of president Al-Assad.

"الجيش السوري الحر، إعدام بلا حدود" 825

826 The opponents and critics of the Syrian revolution denounce the opposition's adoption of the French mandate's flag 1920 – 1946 as the logo and flag of this revolution. They consider this as a bond linkage with the countries which try to dividing and destroying Syria.

827 15 August 2012.

"ظل فرانكشتاين شخصية مميزة في عالم الأفلام المرعبة حتى ظهر ما يسمى الجيش السوري الحر في سوريا، لباساً قناع الثورة، مخبئاً تحته ملامحا قبيحة وشبهة مفتوحة على الدم. فنون في الإعدام لم يعدها الناس لا في ربيع عربي ولا خريف ولا حتى شتاء. فنون تعددت بأشكالها: الشنق، السحل بالسيارات، إطلاق النار، الذبح في الطرقات، رمي المواطنين أحياء من أماكن مرتفعة، وعادة تحصل هذه الأمور وسط تجمعات وعلى مراءى الصغير والكبير ويرافقها الحد وصيحات التكبير، حيث يسحب الموجودون هواتفهم ويوثقون بالصوت والصورة لحظات الإعدام والتشفي والتكيل والجنون وكل ذلك يحدث تحت ظل علم الإنتداب. لا شك بأنها ثورة تستمد أنفاسها من دماء الأبرياء وتعتاش على الطائفية. سنعرض عليكم عددا من مقاطع الفيديو التي تظهر وجه الجيش السوري الحر الذي يريد الإطاحة بالرئيس بشار الأسد ليستلم الحكم بكل هذه الهمجية والعينية والإعدام الذي ليس له حدود. ملاحظة: المقاطع تحتوي على مشاهد قاسية جداً تستوجب تحذير الأطفال وذوي القلوب الضعيفة من مشاهدتها. عمليات تصفية مختلفة: ذبح مواطن على الطريق العام، رمي عمال بريد في حلب من سطح المبنى، إعدام بالرصاص بطريقة وحشية. إذا أردت أن تعرف أكثر عن مفهوم الحرية الجديد فما عليك إلا أن تسأل عناصر ما يسمى بالجيش السوري الحر فليدبرهم تفسيرهم الخاص وهو التحرر من ضوابط وقيد إنسانية أو أخلاقية ودينية".

(17)



The opposition executes people by firing squad.<sup>828</sup>

(18)



The opposition executes people by firing squad.<sup>829</sup>

## 2.2. The Actions of the Armed People against the Regime and its Forces

As from the first days of the eruption of the popular movement, Al-Manar highlighted the assaults of the armed opposition against the police and order-keeping elements, and those on the security men and the soldiers of the Syrian army. The channel completely blasted the idea of the existence of peaceful opposition.

Al-Manar's discourse concerning the actions of the armed opposition against the regime was a direct and explicit one. Imagery, metaphor and metonymy were accidental.

"The armed groups set ambushes against the army"<sup>830</sup> (4 times), "The armed people steal government vehicles"<sup>831</sup>, "The armed people attack the Syrian government forces"<sup>832</sup>, "they break into the official centers"<sup>833</sup>, The idea that the militants are committing crimes against the security

<sup>828</sup> 14 November 2012.

<sup>829</sup> 16 May 2013.

<sup>830</sup> "المجموعات المسلحة تنصب كمان للجيوش"

<sup>831</sup> 09 April 2011. "المسلحون يسرقون سيارات حكومية"

<sup>832</sup> 13 April 2011, 27 June 2011. The synonymous sentences were repeated 48 times. "المسلحون يشنون هجوما ضد القوى الحكومية"

<sup>833</sup> 13 April 2011. "يقتحمون المراكز الرسمية"

and army personnel were repeated 11 times, "Cut off the corpses of the army soldiers"<sup>834</sup> (4 times), "they commit war crimes"<sup>835</sup> (9 times).

"The practices of murder and torture continue in Syria. The latest is the liquidation of a number of the soldiers of the Syrian army by militants in the governorate of Idlib in the north of the country."<sup>836</sup> This is an implied message stating that those who are killed and tortured are the members of the Syrian army, not the anti-regime civilians. It is a message which retorts to the opposition's propaganda.

"The criminals showered the overnight convoy with bullets"<sup>837</sup> is a metonymy of the density of firing Syrian soldiers who were in the bus; they were killed while they were off their work.

Al-Manar cited all the explosions whose victims were military elements. These explosions targeted security and administrative centers. "Of course, the scenes express the gravity of the event; the criminal and terrorist action which happened."<sup>838</sup> The channel always magnified the outcomes of the explosions in order to indicate the seriousness of the gunmen's practices and to completely justify any government reaction, especially, the security and martial reactions. "The practices of the armed groups are driving the events into a dangerous course."<sup>839</sup>

Airing the coverage of the explosion, Al-Manar adopted the same discourse as that of the Syrian Space Channel: "A bloody strike"<sup>840</sup>, "Explosions which aimed at imposing a different local, regional and international rhythm"<sup>841</sup>, "The tone of killing and committing massacres is rising in Syria every time the international Security Council calls for a meeting."<sup>842</sup> This is a denotation that there is a conspiracy against the Syrian Government. In order to assure the fact that conspiring exists, Al-Manar linked the explosions to local and international political incidents. For example, an explosion that takes place before an international conference about the Syrian crisis, or during the arrival of Arab and international investigation committees to Syria in order to investigate what is happening on the ground. "The explosion takes place in critical political moments which are always directed to the interest of the United States of America, especially, in its attempt to compensate for the defeat of the withdrawal from Iraq and the unprecedented intelligence failures which the Central Intelligence of America (CIA) experienced in Lebanon and Iran. Moreover, the most important thing is the failure of the American Administration in turning the Middle East into a permanent area of influence of it and its stepchild Israel which has great expectations of the downfall of the regime of Bashar Al-Assad."<sup>843</sup>

<sup>834</sup> "يتكلمون بجثث جنود الجيش"

<sup>835</sup> "يرتكبون جرائم حرب"

<sup>836</sup> 02 November 2012, "ممارسات القتل والتعذيب تتواصل في سوريا وجديدها تصفية عدد من جنود الجيش السوري على أيدي مسلحين في محافظة إدلب شمال البلاد"

<sup>837</sup> 04 September 2011, "المجرمون أمطروا قافلة المبيت بوابل من الرصاص"

<sup>838</sup> 23 December 2011, "طبعا المشاهد تُعير عن فداحة الحادث، العمل الإرهابي الإجرامي، الذي وقع"

<sup>839</sup> 12 January 2013, "ممارسات المجموعات المسلحة تضع الأحداث في مسار خطير"

<sup>840</sup> 24 December 2011, "ضربة دموية"

<sup>841</sup> 24 December 2011, "تجيرات هدفت إلى فرض إيقاع مختلف محلي، إقليمي و دولي"

<sup>842</sup> 29 January 2013, "نيرة القتل و ارتكاب المجازر ترتفع في سوريا في كل مرة يتداعى فيها مجلس الأمن الدولي للانعقاد"

<sup>843</sup> 24 December 2011.

From sources of the opposition, Al-Manar recalled a group of videos where the militants boast uploading them on the internet. They show the armed opposition assaulting government soldiers: Executing by a firing squad or by hanging, slaughtering, and mutilation of the dead bodies. The armed people proudly document the date of the event and mention which battalion or faction committed these actions against the Syrian soldiers. The cheers rise high: 'God is the Greatest! God is the Greatest!' to denote that these armed people have done things which please Allah and support its religion.

Al-Manar also recalled video footages that showed training sessions performed by the militants, especially Jabhat Al-Nusra and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The militants raised the flag of Al Qaida, cheered the phrase 'God is the Greatest!', and wore headbands on which the phrase 'There is no God but Allah!' was written. All the religious – Islamic – icons turned on Al-Manar's screen into symbols of horror and extremism.

(19)



The Islamic slogans of the armed opposition seem a symbol of extremism and criminality.<sup>844</sup>

(20)



The Islamic slogans change into symbols of murder and terrifying.<sup>845</sup>

"يأتي التججير في لحظات سياسية مفصلية لم تنتفك تصب في مصلحة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، خصوصا في محاولة التعويض عن هزيمة الانسحاب من العراق و الخيبات الاستخباراتية غير المسبوقة التي مُنيت بها وكالة المخابرات المركزية سي أي أي في لبنان و إيران. و قبل ذلك و بعده فشل الإدارة الأمريكية في تحويل الشرق الأوسط إلى منطقة نفوذ دائم لها و لربيبتها إسرائيل التي تعلق آمالا على سقوط نظام الرئيس بشار الأسد".

844 12 January 2013.

845 01 December 2013.

Al-Manar linked the effect of the practices of the armed groups on the regime to that on the people. This method suggests that the enemy of the state and that of the people is one. "The armed people assaulted the public and private properties"<sup>846</sup>, "The explosion caused casualties among the civilians and the military personnel"<sup>847</sup>, "The terrorist armed groups which horrified the civilians in Daraa and assaulted the public and private properties and plants."<sup>848</sup>

### 2.3.Additional Practices of the Armed People

Al-Manar highlighted a group of additional practices which assures the brutality of the armed opposition: Setting fires to the forests and the agricultural crops<sup>849</sup>, booby-trapping the roads and the bridges (9 times), assaulting the national hospitals (5 times).

Turning the mosques, synagogues, churches, schools, cultural centers, hospitals, and homes into military sites and field hospitals (10 times). These are significances of deactivating the activities through deforming the role of the infrastructures which no longer secured the services for the people, but they sent bullets and missiles instead.

"The gunmen have fortified themselves in a number of the residential quarters"<sup>850</sup>, "They are making the residential quarters hiding places for themselves"<sup>851</sup> (3 times), "They are fortifying themselves in the orchards."<sup>852</sup> The implied purpose of this coverage is justifying the bombardment of the regime's forces of the quarters and orchards. "Setting fire to the forests"<sup>853</sup>. This is a counter propaganda of that of the opposition concerning the burning of the forests by the regime's forces." The gunmen are targeting the oil wells"<sup>854</sup> (3 times), "They target the power stations"<sup>855</sup> (3 times). These are indications that the opposition does not care for the situation of the Syrians and deprive them of the services necessary to their lives by the pretext of fighting the regime.

"They are attacking the archeological sites"<sup>856</sup> (16 times), "Syria's monuments were not safe of the firing of the armed groups."<sup>857</sup> These are denotations which suggest that the militants are wreaking havoc and destroying everything without exception. According to Al-Manar, the Syrian legacy is paying the tax of the armed disorder in the country which threatens of erasing the historical and religious ruins which date back to thousands of years. The militants are selling the

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<sup>846</sup> "اعتدى المسلحون على الأملاك العامة و الخاصة"

<sup>847</sup> "التعجير أوقع خسائر بالأرواح، مدنيين و عسكريين"

<sup>848</sup> 01 May 2011. "المجموعات الإرهابية المسلحة التي روعت المواطنين الأمنيين في درعا واعتدت على المنشآت والممتلكات العامة والخاصة"

<sup>849</sup> 10 November 2011.

<sup>850</sup> 01 March 2012, 01 July 2012. "المسلحون يتحصنون بعدد من الأحياء السكنية"

<sup>851</sup> "يتخذون الأحياء السكنية مخاين لهم"

<sup>852</sup> 21 August 2012. "يتحصنون بالبساتين"

<sup>853</sup> "يضرمون النار في الغابات"

<sup>854</sup> "الإرهابيون يستهدفون آبار النفط"

<sup>855</sup> "يستهدفون محطات الكهرباء"

<sup>856</sup> "يهاجمون المواقع الأثرية"

<sup>857</sup> 02 April 2013. "آثار سوريا لم تسلم من نيران المجموعات المسلحة"



history of Syria for a handful of dollars<sup>858</sup>. "The armed people do not find it embarrassing to sell the memory of the Syrian homeland represented in the ruins of Maaloula and others to the brokers outside the country, a behavior which leads to deforming the past and confiscating the future."<sup>859</sup> This is a denotation of the opposition's betrayal of the homeland, Syria, and the conspiring of its soldiers with external actors aiming at the elimination of the Syrian historical treasures.

"The religious holy places are in the fire range of the armed groups in Syria"<sup>860</sup>, "The militants are escalating their attacks against the religious sites"<sup>861</sup>, "A group of the holy religious Islamic and Christian places were exposed to a destructive campaign during the period of events which started two years ago."<sup>862</sup> The implied purpose of these statements is assuring the innocence of the government forces of the charges against them about their bombing the holy places and knocking them down. Al-Manar depicted that the armed opposition assaulting the holy places of the three religions: Islamic, Christian and Jewish. The opposition is plundering, destroying, and robbing the contents of the synagogues, churches and mosques. "Al-Manar observes the burning of the mosques and the holy Quran by the militants."<sup>863</sup> This is an implicit message which means that Al-Manar is pursuing the events on the ground; it does not take its images from unauthenticated sources and the fact is that the opposition, not the regime, is the one which destroys the mosques and burns the holy Quran. At that time, a group of channels accused the regime of burning the Quran and the goal of these charges was the emotional incitement of Arab and non-Arab Moslems.

"The armed people did not respect the specialty of the religious and worshipping places, even the graves. This is the new copy of freedom."<sup>864</sup> This is a direct mockery of the opposition's slogans which show the desire to obtain freedom.

Many times, Al-Manar highlighted the militants' targeting of Shiite shrines and their attempt of destroying them such as Sayyidah Zaynab shrine and Sayyidah Ruqayya. This is a denotation of the opposition's sectarianism and its old renewed hatred of the Shiite sect.

According to Al-Manar, the *takfiri* people's *fatwas* have no exceptions. All the holy shrines, the pious people's tombs, and the Moslem and non-Moslem international ruins are all exposed to destruction and bursting under different pretexts one of which is that those who visit these places worship idols and Gods other than Allah.

The channel recalled old video footages the content of which shows the *takfiri* people bursting a number of shrines in different countries of the world like Iraq, Libya, Mali, Pakistan, Afghanistan and others. Each time the armed people exploded a grave or a shrine, they cheered the phrase: 'God

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858 18 December 2013.

859 18 December 2013. "لا يجد المسلحون حرجاً في بيع ذاكرة الوطن السوري المتمثل بآثار معلولا وغيرها إلى سماسرة الخارج، خطوة من شأنها تشويه الماضي ومصادرة المستقبل."

860 11 February 2013. "المقتلات الدينية في مرمى نيران المجموعات المسلحة في سوريا."

861 11 February 2013. "المسلحون يُصعدون هجماتهم ضد المواقع الدينية."

862 02 April 2013. "كانت مجموعة من الأماكن الدينية المقدسة الإسلامية والمسيحية عرضة لحملة تدمير خلال فترة الأحداث الممتدة منذ سنتين."

863 15 September 2013. "المنار: ترصد إحراق المسلحين للمساجد والقرآن الكريم."

864 08 May 2013. "لم يحترم المسلحون خصوصية الأماكن الدينية والعبادية ولا حتى القبور إنها النسخة الجديدة من الحرية."

is the Greatest! God is the Greatest!<sup>865</sup>. The *takfiri* people were proud at each explosion expressing that they were doing it so that people would worship Allah, the One, who has no partner, and that they, thanks to God, were fighting the disbelievers<sup>866</sup>.

(21)



The militants explode the religious shrines.<sup>867</sup>

The internet was the main source of most of the images of the opposition militants and their activities. These images were mostly misty and shaky (the majority of them were taken by cell phones). They suggest instability and create a state of fear and anxiety. This helps to consolidate the mental image of the danger of the armed opposition which spread death and horror.

(22)



Veiled faces and black and grey colors show the opposition militants as horrifying criminal elements.<sup>868</sup>

(23)



The armed opposition seems on Al-Manar's screen as terrifying murder gangs. The black color and the veiled faces contribute to reinforcing this mental image.<sup>869</sup>

865 01 May 2013.

866 01 May 2013.

867 01 May 2013.

868 15 September 2013.

869 11 October 2013.

(24)



The opposition seems horrible and like uncivilized tribes in battles.<sup>870</sup>

(25)



The low shot helps show the opposition horrible and as a symbol of death.<sup>871</sup>

### 3. Features of the Armed People's Weakness

Al-Manar did not employ direct characteristics to indicate the weakness of the militants such as a weak, defeated, crushed opposition and so on. It rather implied this notion within the ideas and statements: "Syrian army forces inflicted heavy losses on the gunmen"<sup>872</sup> (15 times), "The armed people try to run away"<sup>873</sup> (17 times), "The militants surrendered to the specialized authorities"<sup>874</sup> (3 times), "The armed people withdraw in front of the advance of the regime's forces."<sup>875</sup> The method of implying the characteristic of weakness and not stating it explicitly is an important one in propaganda and psychological war. Al-Manar tried to keep the mental image which presents the opposition as fearful terrorist groups spreading everywhere and extending murder wherever it exists (dangerous groups). At the same time, it attempted to sustain the morale high on the part of all the regime supporters through introducing the government martial acts as

<sup>870</sup> 01 December 2013.

<sup>871</sup> 01 December 2013.

<sup>872</sup> "القوات المسلحة كبدت المسلحين خسائر فادحة"

<sup>873</sup> "المسلحون يحاولون الفرار"

<sup>874</sup> "المسلحون سلموا أنفسهم للجهات المختصة"

<sup>875</sup> 18 November 2013. "يتراجع المسلحون أمام زحف القوات النظامية."

heroic deeds against an appalling terrorism. To realize the balance between these two images, the channel implied the weakness features and did not express them explicitly.

"The militants seemed in a state of exhaustion and suffer from shortage of munitions after days of dense bombing of their sites."<sup>876</sup> This content was repeated during the two years of 2012 and 2013. The voice tones of the media personnel denoted the desire to show the strength of the Syrian army more than showing the opposition's weakness. That is, hinting to the weakness of the opposition reduces the importance of the government martial operations, whereas showing the exhaustion of the opposition owing to the strength of the Syrian army would give an impression of the Syrian state's confrontation of a serious conspiracy in a courageous and challenging way.

Al-Manar highlighted the following weaknesses: the failure of the armed opposition to control border crossings and Syrian regions; the continuity of dissensions and disagreements in the Syrian opposition; splitting on basis of dividing power, spoils, and robbed items; splitting because of the desire to control the natural resources and underground treasures; and the conflicts of the armed factions and the liquidation operations among them.

In 2013, Al-Manar densely covered the battles among the opposition factions, especially among the FSA, Jabhat Al-Nusra and ISIS which Al-Manar called: the Al Qaida-affiliate organizations. The implied goal of this label is reminding the recipient that the role of Al-Qaida was not a positive one; as it is a terrorist organization which legitimizes killing all those who disagree with its views.

Al-Manar's journalists made fun of the opposition leaders who exist in Turkey and other Arab and western countries: "There is something really weird about the Syrian opposition; it broke the standards of all revolutions. A political and field military leadership is altogether abroad. Well, this could be politically right due to security reasons. But what kind of reasons prevent the military leadership from being there on the field? Or is pursuing the developments of the battles from hotels the latest invention of the human mind?"<sup>877</sup> This is a significance of the weakness of the faith of the opposition leaders in the revolution's goals. They are frightened about their lives. Therefore, they hurl the people into a bloody battle while sitting in hotels enjoying peace.

Al-Manar recalled a group of video footages which were uploaded on the internet where some of the armed people appear swearing that they were not going to retreat until death and that they were not going to get out of the areas in which they were fighting whatever the cost would be: "By God the Greatest! We aren't going to leave Al-Qusayr. We aren't going to get out of Al-Qusayr even if we all were cut into pieces."<sup>878</sup>, "By the Lord of Glory! God is with us and we will never

"إن المسلحين قد بدو في حالة إنهالك و يعانون من نقص في الذخيرة بعد أيام من القصف المكثف لمواقعهم" 876 08 August 2012.

877 08 June 2013.

"غريب أمر المعارضة السورية، كسرت معايير الثورات جمعاء، قيادة سياسية و عسكرية ميدانية كلها في الخارج، حسنا قد يجوز ذلك سياسيا لدواعي أمنية، لكن عسكريا أي نوع من الدواعي التي تمنع القيادة العسكرية من الوجود في الميدان، أم أن متابعة مجريات المعارك من الفنادق آخر ما توصل إليه العقل البشري".

"و الله العظيم ما رح نطلع من القصير ما رح نطلع من القصير حتى لو نشقت كليتنا" 878 08 June 2013.

kneel but to God."<sup>879</sup> Al-Manar's journalist commented on these video footages in a sarcastic way: "But the soul is dear as the saying goes"<sup>880</sup>, a denotation that the militants preferred their personal safety to going on fighting; consequently, it is a signifier of the weakness of their doctrine. Then, the journalist explained, sticking to his sarcastic tone, that the militants left behind them their dearest and ran away after they had promised to fight until the last breath; the region did not even witness any clashes. No sooner did the Syrian army merely approach than the militants ran away<sup>881</sup>.

Mentioning the names of some opposition military leaders who were killed either by the Syrian army or by other opposition factions was one of the methods which Al-Manar adopted to show the weakness of the opposition indirectly.

In a video footage, an element of the FSA promises to avenge a leader killed by the elements of ISIS while they all were discussing the battles plan: "By God I will avenge you, Abu Bakri. By God, you will not be buried beneath the earth till I avenge you. All those, who were involved in the story, will be buried."<sup>882</sup> This is a significance of how fast the revenge is; i.e. he will not burry the victim before he takes revenge.

Al-Manar showed ISIS as a monster which swoops down on everything and everybody around it. More than 30 leaders of FSA's were beheaded by this organization. Another number was slaughtered. More often, Al-Manar only mentioned the leaders of FSA in contexts like this. In other words, the channel never recognized in its discourse the existence of an army fighting on the Syrian land except the Syrian army. But the opposition's armed people were either criminals or terrorists and *takfiris* (not an organized army).

"After the field developments between the two opponent factions, the Northern Storm Brigade sent an SOS call to Al-Tawhid Brigade, one of the most prominent armed groups in Aleppo, to interfere in order to support it."<sup>883</sup> This also is an indirect method to show the features of the weakness of the opposition. The FSA is shown defeated, but this time not in front of the Syrian army yet in front ISIS. The factions of FSA ask each other for help so that they might be able to confront ISIS.

"The Syrian opposition accuses ISIS and Jabhat Al-Nusra, which is also affiliated to Al-Qaida, of detaining tens of the opposition fighters on basis of charges pivoting in general around what they call violating the Islamic *Sharia* or around a certain explanation of Islam."<sup>884</sup>

"A prominent field event prevails in the Syrian scene. There are fierce battles between the so-called FSA and ISIS. On the face of it, the motives of these clashes are ideological conflicts.

879 08 June 2013. "و رب العزة أنه الله معنا و لن نركع إلا لله"

880 "لكن النفس عزيزة كما يقال"

881 08 June 2013.

882 13 July 2013. "و الله لأخذ بترك يا أبو بكرى و الله ما بتنزل تحت التراب قبل ما أخذ بترك ، كل الي كانوا بالقصة بدن ينزلوا"

883 19 September 2013. "إثر التطورات الميدانية بين الفصيلين المعارضين أطلق لواء عاصفة الشمال نداء استغاثة طالب به لواء التوحيد أحد أبرز المجموعات المسلحة في حلب التدخل لنصرته"

884 13 July 2013.

"نتهم المعارضة السورية دولة العراق و الشام و جبهة النصرة المرتبطة أيضا بالقاعدة باعتقال عشرات المقاتلين المعارضين بتهم تتحور إجمالاً حول ما يسمونه بمخالفة الشريعة الإسلامية أو تفسير معين للإسلام."

However, they are in fact conflicts between the international supporters and financiers of the two parties."<sup>885</sup> These are the most noticeable comments of Al-Manar's on the reasons of the conflict among the different opposition's armed factions. The purpose of these comments is presenting the evidence that the Syrian state is exposed to a universal conspiracy. The correspondents of Al-Manar interviewed some researchers and analysts in order to get more details concerning this conspiracy.

In the second half of 2013, Al-Manar concentrated on the disputes among the armed factions and densely highlighted intimidating each other and threatening each other of retribution and crushing. The main goal of this selectivity is saying: behold this opposition which wants to overthrow the regime and replace it! They are murdering each other and everyone who has a different opinion of theirs. This selectivity also helps raise the morale of the government supporters who feel that the armed oppositions are fighting each other. Eventually, the Syrian armed forces can avail of this situation and achieve victory.

#### 4. The Admissions of the Combatants

Al-Manar recalled video footages which were transmitted on the Syrian Space Channel which show some of the armed people's admissions of the practices that they performed. In spite of their existence on the Syrian land, the correspondents of Al-Manar did not interview these gunmen. Rather, they only had enough information from the Syrian Space Channel or other pro-regime channels as sources for them concerning the admissions of the detained armed people.

The content of these admissions was: political Lebanese actors which are opponent of the Assad's policy are the ones who finance and guide ruinous armed groups. The combatants assure their attack of police centers. They assure their assault of peaceful demonstrators and depicting these assaults and transmitting them on the sites of social communication in order to charge the Syrian security personnel of committing them. Even the peaceful demonstrators go out to the streets for an amount of money<sup>886</sup>. This is an implied message that there was no true revolution against the regime.

A combatant confessed that he and a group of armed people had beheaded elements of a Syrian *Détachement intégré de sécurité*. He assured that he was obliged to obey the orders of his commanders: "He said to me: 'Either you kill the Syrian *Détachement intégré de sécurité* elements or we will slaughter you'."<sup>887</sup> This is an indication of the fierceness and aggressiveness of the armed opposition even among each other. This means that, the leaders murder all those who disobey their

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<sup>885</sup> 21 September 2013.

"حدث ميداني بارز يطغى على المشهد السوري، معارك طاحنة بين ما يسمى بالجيش الحر و دولة الإسلام في الشام و العراق داعش. الظاهر للعيان أن دوافع الإشتباكات خلافت إيديولوجية و في حقيقة الأمر هي خلافات بين الداعمين و الممولين الدوليين لكلا الطرفين".

<sup>886</sup> 13 April 2013.

<sup>887</sup> 13 June 2011. "قال يا بذك نقتل معنا عناصر المفزة يا مندجك".

commands. "The armed people liquefied a number of people who intended to surrender to the authorities along with their arms."<sup>888</sup>

Another group of the armed people confessed that they slaughtered citizens. One of them narrated some of the slaughtering details: "We laid him down on the ground. I held him at his head. My cousin held him at his legs. I took out the knife, laid it on his neck, said to him: 'Glory be to Allah Who made you *halal* to be slaughtered', and slaughtered him. I slaughtered him. We slaughtered him at his neck. This is the method which Mohammad Kheir Darwish, the head of the battalion, taught us; 'Glory be to God Who made you *halal* to be slaughtered' has a good meaning. It means that Allah will forgive your sins. This is good from Islam."<sup>889</sup> This is an implicit message the purpose of which is highlighting the *takfiri* characteristic of the opposition which considers all those whose views are different from it like animals which God made slaughtering them as *halal* as slaughtering the sheep and cows. Moreover, the one who slaughters is doing something that pleases God and makes Him happy. Therefore, the sins of all those who take part in the murder operations will be forgiven by Allah. In all the videos transmitted by the opposition combatants and recalled by Al-Manar, a large number of the armed people gather in a crowd in order to participate in the murder of the hostages, which is an implied indication that assures the brutality of the opposition which changed the Islamic rituals into satanic ones where slaughtering people becomes as offering a sacrifice to the god so that it might be pleased: "Glory be to Allah Who made you *halal* to be slaughtered' has a good meaning. It means that Allah will forgive your sins".

## 5. Declarations of Combatants which were Uploaded on the Internet

Al-Manar recalled a group of the declarations of the armed people's which were transmitted on the internet. The contents of these declarations assure the soundness of the mental image which the regime and its supporting channels present about the armed opposition. Al-Manar supported the regime's propaganda through recalling the enemy's sources. Here are some of the contents of these declarations: the armed people talk about their blockade of the regions whose people support the Syrian government. "We have put this check point here so as to prevent anyone of them from ever leaving the area"<sup>890</sup>, "We are here monitoring those *Shabbiha*. We are besieging them."<sup>891</sup> The armed people labeled the title of "*Shabbiha*" to all the civilian citizens who supported the government in order to indicate that they are gangs which support a dictator who is corrupt and criminal against the people. In this way the armed groups legalize their blockade and murder of the supporters of Al-Assad and his government.

"المسلحون عمدوا إلى تصفية عدد من الأشخاص الذين كانوا ينوون تسليم أنفسهم و أسلحتهم للسلطات." 09 November 2012.

889 21 August 2012.

"يبلحناه على الأرض، مسكته من رأسه، ابن عمي مسكه من اجريه، شلت السكين و حطيته على رقبته و قتلته: سبحان من حلك للذبح و ذبحته، ذبحناه من رقبته. الطريقة الي علمنا ياها رئيس الكتيبة محمد خير درويش، أنه سبحان من حلك للذبح يعني أنه هي كلمة كويسة بتغفر لك ذنوبك، كويسة من الإسلام".

890 11 February 2013. "عاملين حاجز هون مشان نمعن ما حدا يطلع من أيد".

891 11 February 2013. "نحن هون عم نرصد هالشبيحة هحول نحن محاصرين".

There are other declarations where military commanders of the opposition's assured that a large number of the international intelligence apparatus got involved into supporting the combatants. The talked about Qatari, Saudi, Jordanian, Israeli, American French, and other western countries' involvement through the material, training, and logistic support of the armed opposition and the political one outside Syria. This is a significance of the importance of the Syrian state as many countries try to eliminate this government which stood in the face of imperialism and Zionism, and which said 'No' to the European and American commands.

## 6. Who Is Fighting in Syria?

"The borders witness a flow of the armed people."<sup>892</sup> This is a signifier of the abundance of the foreign combatants who enter the Syrian lands to fight the government.

Al-Manar recalled videos from the Syrian Space Channel (SSC) which show the confessions of the gunmen who came from Arab countries like Jordan and Tunisia. These armed people talked about the actor who sent them and the way how they were persuaded to come to Syria. A journalist from SSC asks a Jordanian gunman: "Who persuaded you of the idea of coming to Syria for *Jihad*?"<sup>893</sup> The Jordanian answers: "It was a person called Adnan Nayhi, from the city of Al-Zarqaa, in Jordan. He persuaded me of Jihad in Syria as the ruler of Syria does not rule in accordance to the Quran and he should be fought against."<sup>894</sup> The purpose of Al-Manar's recalling of these declarations is highlighting the sectarian characteristic of the armed opposition which calls for freedom yet wants to impose the religious dictatorship – the hard-line Islamism – on the Syrian people.

The militants talked about the details of their getting the weapons and the nature of the tasks which were assigned to them. They also talked about the nationalities of the fighters who were living and fighting with them.

"These confessions are an accomplishment of information leaked by western mass media about the overflow of Arab and foreign armed people to Syria."<sup>895</sup> This is an implicit message which means that the confessions of the foreign armed people are not a lie which the regime invented in order to justify its martial operations. They are, rather, facts which are assured by western sources. In other words, these sources might be opponent of the regime, yet they assure the existence of foreign fighters in Syria.

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<sup>892</sup> 29 January 2013. "المناطق الحدودية تشهد تدفقاً لمسلحين".

<sup>893</sup> "مين أقنعك بفكرة الجهاد في سوريا".

<sup>894</sup> 08 August 2012. "شخص اسمه عدنان نايجي، سكان الأردن، مدينة الزرقاء، أقنعني بالجهاد في سوريا على أنه الحاكم في سوريا لا يحكم بالقرآن و يجب الجهاد ضده".

<sup>895</sup> 08 August 2012. "اعترافات تأتي استكمالاً لمعلومات تسريبها وسائل إعلام غربية عن تدفق المسلحين العرب و الأجانب إلى سوريا".



(26)



Foreign militants fight with the pretext of defending Islam.<sup>896</sup>

"'Jihadists' are fighting in Syria."<sup>897</sup> *Jihad* in Islam is an obligation that must be adhered to. However, the explanation of the meaning of *Jihad* differs in accordance with the tendencies of the Islamic religious branches and sects and according to the degrees of extremism. Al-Manar's highlighting of the term 'Jihadists' implicitly means that the opposition is extremist and kills even the Muslims who religiously disagree with it.

Many times, Al-Manar recalled the declarations of Al-Qaida leader, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, who called to support the Intifada in Syria<sup>898</sup>. He also called the Syrians to Jihad and not to depend on Arabs, the west and Turkey because all these do not want a free, Muslim, independent, strong, and Jihadist Syria. They rather want a Syria which is dependent, weak, and which recognizes Israel or goes along with it and which is subjugated to the international oppression. Al-Zawahiri called to continue the Intifada until achieving an independent government which rules according to Islam<sup>899</sup>. One of Al-Zawahiri's declarations is: "Our blessed outrage and our gigantic Intifada will not be quiet, by the permission of Allah, until we raise the *Jihadi* flags of victory."<sup>900</sup>

(27)



The militants are training, but their appearance on Al-Manar's screen changes their training sessions into a symbol of fear.<sup>901</sup>

<sup>896</sup> 05 September 2013.

<sup>897</sup> 12 February 2012. "جهاديون يقاتلون في سوريا"

<sup>898</sup> 12 February 2012.

<sup>899</sup> 12 February 2012.

<sup>900</sup> 09 December 2012. "إن غضبتنا المباركة و انتفاضتنا الجبارة لن تهدأ بإذن الله حتى نرفع رايات الجهاد المنتصرة"

<sup>901</sup> 09 December 2012.

Al-Manar availed of the refusal of many Syrian, Arab, and western peoples of Al-Qaida and its practices. Al-Manar linked the goals of the Syrian opposition to those of Al Qaida. This made the regime seem a civilized, tolerant, secular one which gives way to all worships and doctrines. Hence there is no place for comparison between a *takfiri*, murderous, backward, and underdeveloped opposition on the one hand, and a government that respects openness on the world and demands development on the other hand.

A combatant who came from Saudi Arabia to fight in Syria: "I tell my brothers in the Arabian Peninsula: 'Fight in the way of God. Syria is in need of fighters who have doctrine and gallantry, and you do have them'."<sup>902</sup> This is an indication that the extremists who belong to the Sunni sect have turned the popular movement which demanded reform into a sectarian war and conflict among the Muslims. Id est, they recreated the *fitna* between the Sunni sect and the other Islamic sects.

The channel depicted Jabhat Al-Nusra, which contains hard-line fighters, as a monster which spreads death wherever it exists. Foreign fighters direct religious *Sharia* courts against the Syrian people. That is, the occupying strangers rule the country killing all those who have different opinions from theirs. Jabhat Al-Nusra wants to enforce the Islamic *sharia* and to take the people back to a period before 1400 years. In plain English, everything on the Syrian land must be as it was at the time of the prophet Muhammad.

ISIS was the biggest face of backwardness and underdevelopment. According to the ISIS fighters, all modern technologies are heresies which must be disposed of. Everything which did not exist at the time of the prophet Muhammad – technologies, costumes, tools and so on – must be crushed and eradicated from the life of the Syrians.

Al-Manar also portrayed that the foreign fighters are trying to establish an Islamic state which starts from Syria, and that they do not care whether the Syrian armed opposition – the Syrian fighters- is pleased with this or not. This is a signifier that the military matters are out of the control of the Syrian combatants. Al-Manar recalled declarations of fighters who consider that Jabhat Al-Nusra is well-organized and that it can be considered a substitute of FSA which has been corrupted and whose elements have committed operations of plunder and robbery of the homes and properties of the Syrians<sup>903</sup>. The implicit goal of this coverage is the absolute blasting of the existence of an armed Syrian opposition. This means that the regime's forces are not fighting Syrian opponents yet they are targeting an external, occupier, *takfiri* enemy whom all the world has to collaborate with the Syrian people in order to get rid of it.

According to Al-Manar, the foreign fighters came from many Arab and international countries: KSA, Kuwait, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Iraq, many African countries, Pakistan, Afghanistan,

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<sup>902</sup> 21 August 2012. "أقول لأخوتي في جزيرة العرب قاتلوا في سبيل الله، الشام بحاجة إلى مقاتلين أهل عقيدة و نخوة و أنتم كذلك"

<sup>903</sup> 12 January 2013.

Hungary, a group of European countries, America, and so on. To assure the existence of foreign fighters, Al-Manar depended on Arab and international sources. In other words, it did not only depend on the Syrian sources in order to stress the credibility of the Syrian government concerning this matter. As if the channel wanted to say: Behold, world! Since the beginning, the Syrian authorities have assured the arrival of *takfiri* people to Syria. But you did not believe. Now, we have evidence from sources, which are not pro-regime ones, assuring to you that those who are fighting are not Syrians and that what is going on is not a revolution for attaining freedom; it is rather an extremist terrorist attack.

"The numbers of the Arab and foreign armed victims are escalating day by day, especially in Eastern Ghouta and Qalamon in indications that the *takfiri* groups have become the main element in the most violent battles on the Syrian land."<sup>904</sup> Concerning the foreign victims, Al-Manar did not hesitate to present huge numbers that reach thousands of fighters. Mentioning gigantic numbers of the foreign armed victims was a pride for the Syrian army which achieves great achievements and fights an external malicious enemy. The channel reiterated the notion of western interference in the Syrian crisis through the financing and training of the foreigners, and through sending them, with the help of bordering countries of Syria like Jordan and Turkey, to fight against the army which protects the country. This is a new significance of the universal conspiracy which targets the resistant Syrian state.

(28)



The militants are displaying their strength, but their appearance on Al-Manar's screen changes them into a symbol of fear.<sup>905</sup>

## 7. Interviews with the Syrian Citizens about the Armed People

The interviews of the Syrians were either with Al-Manar's correspondents or with those of the Syrian pro-regime channels (Al-Manar recalled these interviews, especially from SSC). Al-

<sup>904</sup> 01 December 2013.

"تتصاعد أرقام قتلى المسلحين من العرب و الأجانب يوماً بعد يوم خاصة في الغوطة الشرقية و القلمون في دلالات على أن الجماعات التكفيرية باتت العنصر الرئيس في المعارك الأعنف الدائرة على أرض سوريا".

<sup>905</sup> 08 August 2012.

Manar's continual adopting of the interviews of the Syrian channels with the citizens again suggests that Al-Manar is a real extension of those channels (the official holder of the government's propaganda). Al-Manar's sample included different age groups.

### 7.1. The Declarations of the Males

The features of the males were characterized by outrage, fear, anxiety, tension and disgust of the opposition's combatants. A number of the citizens explained the practices of the combatants such as: blocking the roads, cutting electricity off, depriving people of bread, burning the government centers and hospitals, and the most important thing is shooting citizens everywhere and performing many explosions. "They are terrorists, murderers. They launched two rockets which hit my own house. One here, another here. They caused very huge injuries. They shook the building"<sup>906</sup>, "The terrorists entered the village and devastated the people and killed 17 children of Adam's."<sup>907</sup>

(29)



The people are angry and furious with the armed opposition.<sup>908</sup>

"These gangs' combatants are criminals. They are criminals against God, the homeland, and human beings."<sup>909</sup> This is an indication of the people's refusal of the armed opposition out of a religious, national, and moral principle. "Religion is morals, principles, and values. They have nothing; no morals, no values, and no principles."<sup>910</sup> This popular refusal was reiterated in Al-Manar's sample from 2011 to 2013. It is a significance of the insistence of the people on their opinion concerning the opposition. "The Syrian people do not deserve this; killing a believer is never justified. Islam encourages love, cooperation, sacrifice, and tolerance. Islam is innocent of them."<sup>911</sup> This is a signifier whose purpose is countering the opposition's propaganda concerning the combatants' obeying the commands of Islam in fighting the enemies of God. The Syrians want

<sup>906</sup> 10 September 2013. "قتلة إرهابيون أطلقوا صاروخين، نزلوا في منزلي، قذيفة هون و قذيفة هون، أدت لإصابات مادية كبيرة جداً، زعزت البناء."

<sup>907</sup> 15 September 2013. "دخلوا الإرهابيين على القرية ودمروا الأهالي ودمروا المواطنين و دبحوا 17 بني آدم."

<sup>908</sup> 01 December 2012.

<sup>909</sup> 20 June 2011. "هذول مسلحي العصابات، المجرمين، هذول مجرمين بحق الله و بحق الوطن و بحق العباد."

<sup>910</sup> 28 July 2013. "الدين أخلاق و قيم و مبادئ و هنن ما في عنندن شي، لا أخلاق و لا قيم و لا مبادئ."

<sup>911</sup> 23 November 2013. "الشعب السوري لا يستحق ذلك، من قتل مؤمناً فلا مبرر له. الإسلام يحض على المحبة على التعاون على الإخاء على التضحية على التسامح، هذول الإسلام بريء منهم."

to implicitly tell the armed people: 'We are the Muslims, not you! We have the right to talk about Islam, not you!'

It was noticed that there was similarity between the descriptions the citizens used and those used by the Syrian pro-regime channels: a terrorist act, a criminal act, blood shedding of the Syrian people, Syria is stand-still and towering forever in the face of the conspiracy<sup>912</sup>, and so on. "We denounce this criminal act. We denounce this terrorist act"<sup>913</sup>, "The more they terrorize us, the more they cause our love of the homeland"<sup>914</sup>, "God will! We will remain stand-still in the face of terrorism."<sup>915</sup> This indicates how strongly people are affected by the media messages.

One of those who were tortured by the armed people said: "They took me to a house whose location I was ignorant of. I only knew that it was in Al Hajar Al Aswad. They led me into a room and started treading me with their feet, electricity, rods, and iron."<sup>916</sup> Many Syrians talked about their being tortured by the armed groups without knowing why they were being tortured. This method denotes that the armed opposition assaults people with no reason, no justification. It is also a method which suggests that the armed people kill only for the sake of killing and torture in order to please themselves and satisfy their sadism.

(30)



The people are angry and afraid of the armed opposition.<sup>917</sup>

Many Syrians expressed their sympathy and deep grief towards the Syrian armed forces: "What sin have these soldiers committed? All of them are our sons or our brothers! Well! Well! I mean what is going on does not please an unbeliever nor a Muslim, nor any other religion. We only resort to God, who is the best to be depended upon!"<sup>918</sup>

912 17 March 2012.

913 17 March 2012. "نحن منسنتكر هاد العمل الإجرامي، هاد عمل إرهابي نحن مستنكره."

914 17 March 2012. "كلما أرهبونا زلونا حبا بالوطن."

915 10 September 2013. "بذنا نضل صامدين بوجه الإرهاب بإذن الله."

916 28 July 2012. "أخذوني على بيت أجهل مكانه، في الحجر الأسود، و فوتوني على غرفة و بلشو في تغيب برجلهم و بالكهرباء و بالعصى و بالحديد"

917 08 June 2012.

918 28 July 2013. "يعني هدول العساكر شو ذنين، كلن ولادنا و كلن أخوتنا، ما يعرف ما يعرف، يعني الشئ الي عم يصير لا كافر بيرضاه و لا مسلم و لا دين من الأديان. بس حسينا الله و نعم الوكيل."

The content of the citizens' declarations also centers on their refusal of the opposition's slogans. Especially those which aim at freedom; as the Syrians considered that the freedom which the armed opposition demands is represented by explosions, murder, and bombing people. "What is the meaning of the freedom which they want? Please tell us! We want to understand. By God! They devastated us. They destroyed all this country."<sup>919</sup>

"I don't grasp why these people are launching these missiles! Do they care for the revolution, or for improvement? Or is it murdering innocent people what they care for? It's high time the state put an end to these things. In my opinion, it should strike with an iron arm."<sup>920</sup> This is an indication that the people do not recognize the existence of a revolution which aims at freedom and at improving the living conditions. The main goal of this declaration is assuring that the people support the government forces and ask them to intensify their martial operations and bring the battle to an end: "The state should strike with an iron arm."

(31)



A wounded man explains about the assaults of the armed groups.<sup>921</sup>

## 7.2. The Declarations of Females

The majority of females were wearing *hijab*, which indicates the attitude of the Sunni sect towards the armed opposition. "May God take revenge from them! May God not strengthen them! They claim that their leader is our master Muhammad, but no; our master Muhammad is innocent from them. Religion is innocent from them. They are making fun of religion; they entered to plunder."<sup>922</sup> This is a signifier of the refusal of the Sunni sect of the combatants' practices. They do not represent Islam. This is what the woman is trying to say; they do not represent the Sunni sect as they claim. The woman prays to God to punish these armed people. She did not only renounce them but she also wanted God to punish them, which denotes a high level of popular outrage against the combatants.

<sup>919</sup> 28 July 2013. "شو معنى الحرية الي بدن ياها، بس فهمونا، و الله يعني خربونا، خربوا هالبلد كلها."

<sup>920</sup> 28 July 2013. "ما بعرف لي هالناس عم يضربوا هالقتانف! هل همن الثورة، و لا همن يحسنوا، و لا همن يقتلوا العالم الأبرياء؟ لازم الدولة توضع حد لهالش، أنا برأي تضرب من حديد."

<sup>921</sup> 01 December 2012.

<sup>922</sup> 28 July 2013. "الله ينتقم ممن، الله لا يجبرن، هنن بقولوا عن قاتنن سيدنا محمد، بس لا، سيدنا محمد بري ممن، الدين بري ممن، هنن عم يضحكوا عالدين هنن دخلوا بنهيرا!"



(32)



A woman wearing the Sunni hijab is complaining about the practices of the militants.<sup>923</sup>

(33)



A woman wearing the Sunni hijab is talking about the practices of the terrorists.<sup>924</sup>

A veiled woman comments on an explosion performed by a suicide bomber: "By God, we are going to worship Allah. All the people are going to worship Allah. It should not be this way."<sup>925</sup> The implicitly indicates that the armed people have no exceptions; they did not except even the Sunni sect. The implied purpose is assuring that the Syrian armed forces and the security personnel did not kill the prayers as the opponent channels claim.

Another woman wearing *hijab* said: "All terrorism is behind them. That's what they send to us, and it is clear who is financing them."<sup>926</sup> This is an indication that the people, especially the Sunni sect, are sure that there is a conspiracy. There are countries which export terrorism to Syria.

Other women expressed their shock of what was taking place in Syria and that they were enjoying security and peace before the beginning of the revolutionary events. They also explicitly

923 20 June 2011.

924 20 June 2011.

925 27 April 2012. "و الله رايعين نعيد الله، العالم كلها رايحة تعيد الله، مو هيك يصير".

926 27 April 2012. "ورا هن كل هالارهاب، هاد الي عم بيعتولنا ياه، و التمويل مينين".

expressed their refusal of the opposition's slogans concerning freedom. Many of them considered that the freedom of the combatants was explosions, slaughtering and considering all those who have different opinions of theirs as traitors. The women called the victims from the security personnel and the Syrian army soldiers as 'martyrs'. This shows that the Sunni sect recognized what the government forces do as a holy act whose result is immortality in God's paradise.

The women expressed their feelings of horror and fear whenever the armed groups controlled an area. They always linked the existence of the Syrian army to their feeling of security and safety, which is a signifier that the Syrian forces protect the homeland, loyal to the people, and keep women away from any assault.

## **8. The Opposition's Weapons**

Al-Manar depicted that the opposition has light weapons, medium and heavy. They had automatic guns –Kalashnikov, service revolvers, pump action shotguns, Pulemyot Kalashnikov, dynamite, explosive fillings, explosive devices, bombs, mortars, Rocket Propelled Grenades, rocket launchers, and surface-to-air missiles. The opposition also owned factories for manufacturing explosive devices and rockets.

As for the chemical weapons, Al-Manar positively stated that the opposition is the one which targeted the civilians with rockets containing toxic substances and considered this a serious escalation. In order to acquit the regime of the opposition's charges of using these weapons, Al-Manar stated that the Syrian authorities warned the people against the possibility of combatants' use of the chemical rockets after the latter seized factories for manufacturing the Chlorine<sup>927</sup>. It also mentioned that a number of reports indicated that the armed groups, especially Jabhat Al-Nusra were preparing for a massive chemical attack. Al-Manar and the other pro-regime channels had a heavy responsibility which makes it an obligation for them to retort continuously and instantaneously to all the charges against the government forces on a huge number of Arab and international channels.

The most prominent sources of these weapons for the armed people were: the Arab and western support and financing, seizing government security and military centers and robbing the weapons in them.

Mostly, mentioning the names of these weapons was in the contexts of talking about: the Syrian State's confiscation of weapons owned by the terrorist groups, finding these weapons out after the Syrian army was able to control some areas and force the combatants to depart their sites and leave their equipment and weapons behind. These contexts combine presenting evidence that the armed groups are dangerous and showing the strength of the Syrian state and its control of the situation.

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927 19 March 2013.



The other context of mentioning the names of the weapons is assaulting the civilians by the opposition.

Many times, the channel linked the opposition's ownership of developed weapons and its ownership of developed communication stations, developed communication devices, developed phones, and developed cameras. This is a denotation of how big and strong the western support of this opposition was, and consequently, assuring that Syria was exposed to a big conspiracy.

## **9. Human Icons**

Al-Manar mentioned the names of the armed people and presented them only in two cases: when their death had a significant indication such as the death of an FSA leader by Jabhat Al-Nusra or ISIS, or during committing aggressive and brutal operations against the Syrians. The general characteristic of Al-Manar's discourse was generalization, (the armed people, the terrorists, and so on). That is to say, without focusing on specific characters. This gives an impression that the armed opposition consists of groups of mob with no definite leadership, and that it does not have any organizational structure as many channels promote.

## **10. Regional Icons**

The importance of every governorate, city, area, quarter, and street in Syria was the same. The news context of Al-Manar's suggests that every hand span of Syria exposed to the assaults of the terrorists was worthy of media exposure.

These regions have different significances on Al-Manar's screen. Some regions have a strategic denotation like Homs and Aleppo. Others have implicit significances. For example, the combatants' assault on Maaloula in Damascus Suburb is a denotation of the armed people's targeting of the Christians. A massacre in Lattakia countryside is a signifier of the armed people's targeting of the Alawites.

# **The Consequences of the War as Presented by Al-Manar**

## **1. The Dead and the Wounded**

"Martyrs" (42 times), "victims" (27 times), "innocent people" (4 times)<sup>928</sup>. Al-Manar adopted these labels to express the civilian casualty and those of the government security and military forces. "Martyrs" denotes that the destiny of these murdered people is paradise.

Labeling the civilians with these terms indirectly shows them as supporters of the regime even if they were not actually so. Since the channel's attitude strongly supports the Syrian regime, since

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شهداء، ضحايا و أبرياء 928

Al-Manar does not cover all the events when civilians die, and since it highlights the deaths only in contexts which serve the regime, when the channel talks about the casualty, the recipient subconsciously can label the civilians with the characteristic of being loyal to the government.

"The families of the martyrs assure their commitment to the national unity and their rejection of *fitna*"<sup>929</sup> this is an indirect denotation that the families of the murdered civilians support the Syrian government as these statements suggest that the regime is the symbol of national unity and that it confronts a conspiracy which those who adopted it try to create *fitna* among the sections of the people. Al-Manar repeatedly employed this type of statements. In other words, it did not adopt the words which have direct indications of the citizens' loyalty to the government.

Al-Manar highlighted the victims of the explosions who were murdered by terrorists – according to the labels of the channel. The continual association between the death of the civilians and that of the military members was noticed. "The initial toll confirms casualties among the civilians and the military personnel"<sup>930</sup>, "May mercy be to the souls the civilian and military martyrs who fell as a result of this terrorist operation today!"<sup>931</sup>, "A number of martyrs and around 30 injured who all were civilians and order-keeping personnel have fallen as a result of the explosion resulting from a suicide bombing"<sup>932</sup>, "A few days after the massacre, the dead bodies of the martyrs, with the torture traces clear on them, arrived at the military hospital of Aleppo, while it turned out that a number of them were burned. What the members of the Syrian army and civilians have been exposed to has resulted in a shock to the Syrians and the humanitarian establishments of what may be considered as a war crime."<sup>933</sup>

This method shows that the enemy of the state and the people is the same one and that the opposition does not target the military forces only, but it also murders the civilians. Id est, it is not an honorable revolutionary opposition.

Al-Manar boldly presented images full of blood, cut off corpses, and scattered pieces of dead bodies everywhere. The streets seemed like a pond full of blood and cut off human flesh. Al-Manar always apologized for the savageness of the presented scenes. This daring presentation of frightening images seems as a defensive method through which the government confronts the opposition's propaganda, a method of creating a Syrian, and perhaps an Arab and international, public opinion which sympathizes with the people and the state who face a horrible terrifying enemy.

<sup>929</sup> 02 December 2011. "أهالي الشهداء يؤكدون تمسكهم بالوحدة الوطنية و نبذ الفتنة".

<sup>930</sup> 23 December 2011. "الحصيلة الأولية تؤكد سقوط ضحايا من المدنيين والعسكريين".

<sup>931</sup> 23 December 2011. "الرحمة على أرواح الشهداء مننيين وعسكريين الذين سقطوا اليوم ضحايا لهذه العملية الإرهابية".

<sup>932</sup> 27 April 2012. "عدد من الشهداء و قرابة 30 جريح جميعهم من المدنيين و عناصر حفظ النظام سقطوا جراء الانفجار الناتج عن تفجير انتحاري".

<sup>933</sup> 28 July 2013.

"قبع أيام على المجزرة وصلت إلى المستشفى العسكري في حلب جثامين الشهداء و آثار التكتيل بادية عليها فيما تبين أن عددا منها تم حرقه. و شكل ما تعرض له أفراد من الجيش السوري و المدنيين صدمة لدى السوريين و المؤسسات الإنسانية مما يمكن وصفه بجريمة حرب".

(34)



A smashed body because of a suicide bombing.<sup>934</sup>

Al-Manar recalled videos downloaded from the internet of massacres against civilians and military personnel. The images show corpses piled above each other on the road, on a lorry, and by rivers. They also showed dead bodies lined next to each other in order to be photographed and to boast of their number (the opposition is immoral; it delights in watching the murdered people and boasts of committing massacres).

(35)



Piled dead bodies of Assad supporters.<sup>935</sup>

The channel restated that the majority of the wounded murdered people are women and kids. This is an emotional enticement which implicitly denotes the desire of Al-Manar to defend the civilians, and consequently confront the other channels which claim their support of the Syrian citizens. On the other hand, we can notice that the channel was not able of completely denying that there were civilian casualties, especially due to the modern means of communication. Therefore, it had to find a way of acquitting the regime of the charges of murdering these civilians. So, the channel resorted to this method of confronting the charges by counter ones: the armed people are killing the women and the children.

<sup>934</sup> 23 December 2011.

<sup>935</sup> 22 June 2012.

(36-37)

The militants' murder of children.<sup>936</sup>

Al-Manar interviewed officials supervising the operations of recovering the dead bodies from the debris. Their discourse implied their strong determination to recover the survivors from the rubble. This is a significance of the loyalty of the regime to the people and of its determination to keep the civilians safe.

### Interviews with the citizens about the casualty

A man with tears in his eyes talks to Al-Manar's correspondent after the death of his daughter in a school explosion committed by the armed groups: "My sweetheart has gone away in Ramadan". That is, the armed people murdered her in the holy month, the month of tolerance. This also means that she is a martyr. "She went to search learning" which means that they murdered her without any reason. She did nothing to be killed for it; she was just going to school. "Through your channel, I am going to send a message to the councils, to the conferences which are being held abroad: 'Fear God for Syria! We are O.K. without your councils and conferences. We are tired'."<sup>937</sup> Here is an indication of the confidence in Al-Manar's channel "Through your channel, I am going to send a message." This man condemns all the Arab and international conferences which oppose the policy of the regime. This is a significance that the cause of death in Syria is supporting the combatants, who murder the kids, by Arab and international actors.

The expressions of many citizens were clear and indicated their political affiliation as supporters of the government. On the other hand, the discourse of some others did not clearly show their political identity. However, their acceptance to talk to Al-Manar's correspondents and to appear on the screen of this station is enough to suggest that these citizens are supporters of the government even if they were not. For instance, we see a veiled woman whose school-boy son was murdered talking to Al-Manar's correspondent: "May God be unkind to those who were behind it."<sup>938</sup> This woman is praying to God against those who caused the killing of the school pupils.

<sup>936</sup> 08 June 2012.

<sup>937</sup> 05 December 2012. "راحت فلذة كبدي برمضان، راحت تطلب علم، من خلال قناتكن روح وجه رسالة للمجالس، للمؤتمرات التي عم تتعقد خارج البلاد: اتقوا الله في سوريا، نحن مرتاحين بدون مؤتمراتكن و مجالسكن، تعبنا".

<sup>938</sup> 05 December 2012. "الله لا يوفق الي كان السبب".

This statement does not directly show the political identity of this woman. This statement can be explained in many ways: the woman can be praying against the regime's forces while she cannot explicitly express that she hates them, or she is praying against the combatants of the opposition indirectly perhaps because she was afraid of their reaction; or she does not know who committed this criminal action against the kids and the young people. Whatever her intention was, her mere appearance on Al-Manar's screen is enough to show her as a supporter of the Syrian government.

(38)



The woman is praying against those who were the cause of her son's death.<sup>939</sup>

While the anti-regime channels were assuring that it had committed a chemical weapon massacre, Al-Manar was trying to prove the incredibility of these alleges. The channel recalled video footages transmitted on the SSC showing wounded and murdered people who had been hit by the chemical weapons. The correspondents of SSC interviewed some of the survivors, among whom there were children. A little girl said crying: "Mommy! Mommy! It hit the ground. We don't know where daddy and brother are. May Allah be unkind to them! God will, you may die! God will, you may die!"<sup>940</sup> The voice tone of the little girl is full of grief for losing her family. She prays to Allah that those who caused the death of her mother may die. Her appearance on the pro-regime SSC and the adoption of Al-Manar of it suggests that the little girl is praying against the armed opposition, albeit she might not. This is one of the methods of the media war. The journalists give an impression of the loyalty of citizens to the government and of their hatred of the combatants, even if this is not true, through showing their declarations on a screen which has a clear political affiliation – namely, a pro-regime one.

A doctor who works in a government hospital talks about people who were injured by the chemical weapon: "Today a large number of intoxicated people came to us. It is believed that they are a kind of phosphoric or intoxicating materials. They cause severe symptoms, nausea, severe vomiting and suffocation."<sup>941</sup> This is a message that the doctors of the government are the ones

939 05 December 2012.

940 19 March 2013. "يا ماما، ماما طُيْتُ بالأرض و أبوي و أخوي ما منعرف وين، الله لا يوقفن، إن شاء الله يتموتو، إن شاء الله يتموتو."

941 19 March 2013. "وردنا اليوم عدد كبير من التسممات يُعتقد أنها نوع من المواد الفوسفورية أو المواد السامة، عم تسبوي أعراض حادة و غثيان و قيئات شديدة و اختناق."

who save people. Consequently, the regime is innocent of the charge of bombarding the civilians with the chemical weapons.

"Our generation and our kids are flowers. They are our hearts. Those who did this action don't want our kids to do their part in learning and education. However, we will send our kids to school without being terrified by that."<sup>942</sup> This declaration of the father of a child who was killed during exploding a school by the combatants. The discourse was not sentimental. It rather was full of challenge. The father did not express his grief although the event was still fresh. He rather explained the purpose of killing the children and sent a message challenging the armed people. This is a denotation of the popular outrage of the practices of the armed opposition; an anger which beats grief and boosts the feeling of challenge. The attitude of this man towards the government was implicit through insisting to send the children to school to practice their role in learning and education; the state is responsible for schools.

"Al-Manar visited the family of two martyrs who were executed by the armed groups in Al-Raqqa in Syria"<sup>943</sup> which is an indication of the mutual relation and confidence between Al-Manar channel and the citizens. Al-Manar tried to suggest how careful it was in covering the burial ceremonies of the civilian dead people. The morale of the families of the military and civilian victims seemed high. In spite of the grief, the features of the citizens denoted the confidence of victory. The channel highlighted the people's sympathy and grief for the civilian and military victims.

Al-Manar employed emotional enticing phrases in order to show the suffering of the citizens due to the crimes of the armed groups. "Gabi, the originally Romanian woman and the wife of the victim Iyad, couldn't talk in Arabic or in any other language as the tongue was unable to express her feelings owing to the horror which the crime caused"<sup>944</sup>. "The blood of tens of civilians has not dried yet."<sup>945</sup> This is a significance of continuing the murder operations; before the blood is dry, new blood is shed. "Among the Syrian cities, the murder vehicles move harvesting more innocent souls"<sup>946</sup>. This is an indication of the existence of explosions everywhere. The channel likened the booby-trapped vehicles to harvesters, and the civilians to the crops which these harvesters uproot. Harvest symbolizes fertility and abundance yet the identity of the harvester changed the value of harvest; the harvester stands for the criminals and the harvest stands for the innocent lives. In this example, we see that the values of nature's signs are not of mono but of multi connotations according to the identities of the subject and the object.

"جيلنا و أطفالنا هدول زهرات، فلذات أكبادنا، من قام بهذا الفعل لا يريد لأبنائنا أن يمارسوا دورهم التربوي و التعليمي، نحن سنرسل أبنائنا إلى المدرسة و لن يُرهينا ذلك." 942 05 December 2012.

"المنار زارت عائلة شهيدتين أعدمتهما المجموعات المسلحة في الرقة بسوريا." 943 26 May 2013.

"أما غابي، الرومانية الجنسية زوجة الضحية إياد، لم تستطع التكلم بالعربية و لا بغيرها فاللسان يعجز عن التعبير من هول الجريمة." 944 26 May 2013.

"لم تجف بعد دماء عشرات المدنيين." 945 16 September 2013.

"بين المدن السورية تنتقل سيارات الموت حاصدة المزيد من أرواح الأبرياء." 946 20 October 2013.

Al-Manar interviewed survivors from massacres. They talked about the details of the combatants' practices in a way which suggests that the elements of the armed groups resemble wild beasts which kill mercilessly.

## 2- Extraterritorial Asylum and Displacement

The issues of extraterritorial asylum and displacement of the Syrians did not take much room in Al-Manar's sample – in comparison with Al-Manar's coverage of the security and military events. The channel's method in dealing with these themes shows another tool of propaganda and psychological war. In 2011, in order to sustain a high morale, Al-Manar avoided talking about the departure of the Syrians from their lands assuring the refugees were coming back to Syria. "The return of hundreds of refugees"<sup>947</sup>, "The number of the Syrian refugees who came back to their country has amounted to five thousands"<sup>948</sup>, "The return of 265 Syrians from the Turkish camps to Jisr Al-Shughour"<sup>949</sup>, "The number of Syrian refugees who returned from the Turkish camps to Jisr Al-Shughour has amounted until now to around 12,000 people, while the few remaining there are waiting for facilities from the Turkish authorities"<sup>950</sup>, "The majority of the families in the city of Al-Jisr and the villages of Ein Al-Sawda and Al-Mintar have completely returned to their homes."<sup>951</sup>

However, Al-Manar could not utterly deny the fact that a number of the Syrian refugees are outside the Syrian borders as the traditional and modern communication media were on the alert against the media blackout which Al-Manar adopted concerning several themes which do harm to the image of the ruling regime. Therefore, Al-Manar talked about the refugees in Turkey for example, yet it kept the context which shows the desire of the Syrians to return to their country. Talking about the refugees in Syria was nearly always accompanied by the return of hundreds or thousands to Syria. That is to say, Al-Manar could not fully deny the issue of the extraterritorial asylum, but at the same time, it tried to face the channels which make the issue of asylum and displacement an important tool of fighting the regime and criticizing its martial policy. Al-Manar continually linked the success of the government security and military operations on the one hand, and the ability of the people to return to their areas and their homes.

"The Syrian army controlled the city of Jisr Al-Shughour and its suburbs. Nevertheless, it is still chasing some armed groups in the neighborhood. Any way, if the residents of Jisr Al-Shughour did not return today as the residents of some villages did, they would certainly return tomorrow when they have felt that safety and security have been reclaimed."<sup>952</sup> The implied purpose of this

<sup>947</sup> 03 July 2011. "عودة مئات اللاجئين".

<sup>948</sup> 03 July 2011. "إن عدد اللاجئين السوريين الذين عادوا إلى بلادهم بلغ خمسة آلاف".

<sup>949</sup> 04 August 2011. "عودة 265 سوريا من المخيمات التركية إلى جسر الشغور".

<sup>950</sup> 04 August 2011. "إن عدد العائدين من المخيمات التركية إلى منازلهم في مدينة جسر الشغور بلغ حتى الآن نحو 12 ألف شخص، فيما ينتظر القلة الباقية تسهيل عودتهم من قبل الجهات التركية".

<sup>951</sup> 04 August 2011. "غالبية العائلات في مدينة الجسر وقرى عين السودا والمنطار عادت بشكل كامل إلى بيوتها".

<sup>952</sup> 13 June 2011.

"الجيش السوري أحكم سيطرته على مدينة جسر الشغور و محيطها إلا أنه مازال يلاحق بعض المجموعات المسلحة في الجوار. في كل الأحوال إن لم يعد سكان جسر الشغور اليوم كما فعل سكان بعض القرى المحيطة فيلتأكد سيفعلون غدا عندما يشعرون باستعادة الأمن و الأمان".

denotation is assuring that the reason of the running away of the citizens is the practices of the armed groups, and that the true saviors of the people are the army and the security forces. We can notice here that Al-Manar could not deny that there were refugees and displaced people. However, it employed the context to serve the regime's propaganda about the fact that the Syrian army was not the cause of emigrating the people. "The people have not returned now, but they will do when they have felt that safety and security have been reclaimed". This is an indication of the inevitability of the victory of the Syrian army. It is also a significance of the connection of the return of the people to the victory of the Syrian army. If the armed opposition gained victory, the people would not return to their homes.

In 2012, especially in the second half, the numbers of the Syrian refugees and displaced people increased because of the high tension of the war. At the same time, the opponent channels intensified their coverage of the situation of the refugees. Therefore, Al-Manar had to balance between presenting the suffering of the Syrian people and clearing the regime from the charge of driving the people away.

(39)



The suffering of the displaced people because of the assaults of the armed groups.<sup>953</sup>

"Al-Manar surveys the situation of the displaced people in Lattakia"<sup>954</sup> is an implicit message which means that Al-Manar's correspondents view what is taking place on the ground. That is to say, the channel enjoys a high credibility.

"The Syrian people have always received their brothers of the neighboring countries during wars and crises. Now, things are the other way round and the Syrian exodus whether abroad or into the Syrian cities has become the most prominent event."<sup>955</sup> This is an emotional enticement; the Syrian people received the Lebanese, the Iraqis, the Palestinians and others. However, these people now need those who might shelter them. Al-Manar's employment of emotional enticements in favor of the people has an implied purpose which is assuring that the Syrian armed forces are innocent and that they are not the cause of driving the citizens away (Al-Manar is a channel that supports the regime. It supports the refugees. Then, the regime can never be the cause of the agony of the displaced people). "The hopes of the displaced people of the close returning to their homes and cities fluctuate along with news which raise their hopes about the advancing of the Arab Syrian

<sup>953</sup> 24 December 2012.

<sup>954</sup> 24 December 2012. "المنار تعاین النازحين السوريين في اللاذقية".

<sup>955</sup> 24 December 2012. "لطالما استقبل الشعب السوري أخوته من الدول العربية المجاورة جراء حروب أو أزمات. انقلب الحال و أصبح النزوح السوري هو الحدث سواء إلى الخارج أو بين المدن السورية".



army's operations in Aleppo alongside with their conviction that they were still under the homeland's ceiling even if it were in the name of obligatory displacement."<sup>956</sup> This is a direct link between the emotional enticement in favor of the people and reminding that the army is the savior.

"It is only a geographic displacement. The body has moved but the soul has not departed the borders of the country waiting for the tomorrow of return. It is the tomorrow of return of security and stability to the whole map of Syria. Tomorrow is close for those who wait for it."<sup>957</sup> This is another example of Al-Manar's linking between the emotional enticement in favor of the people through talking about their suffering and announcing the good news of the army's victory; that is, the probability of the refugees' coming back to their homes. Again, the army is the savior.

"The dream of the Syrians has always been returning to their homeland as soon as possible"<sup>958</sup>, "The hope of the residents of those villages has always been the return of security and peace as they were before, and the elimination of black clouds which carried blood and destruction to Syria with them."<sup>959</sup> These are implicit denotations of the loyalty of the people to the government and their eagerly anticipating the victory of the Syrian army.

The voice tones of Al-Manar's journalists were simultaneously balancing between the recipients' sympathy with the Syrian people without suggesting strong worry and fear. That is, the tone suggested the desire of the correspondents to sustain the high morale.

"Despite the hard circumstances, the Syrian state has prepared residence places for the displaced people. It also provided them with the basic services"<sup>960</sup>, "Continuous periodical tasks for receiving the citizens and round-the-clock answering their calls, even the electronic ones, in order to solve their problems."<sup>961</sup> The implied intention of these indications is assuring the uprightness of the Syrian government and its devotion to serving the citizens. Consequently, it is a significance of the regime's innocence of the charges against it. "Tartous receives the displaced people from other Syrian governorates, and the state provides all their needs."<sup>962</sup> This is a signifier of the collaboration between the people and the state. The people host those who were displaced from other areas and the state provides the services. All are one hand in the face of the displacement crisis.

In 2012 and 2013, the channel did not magnify the issue of the displaced people inside Syria because it was always talking about the government's activities and the services it provides to these

956 24 December 2012.

"تتأرجح الأمال لدى النازحين بالعودة القريبة إلى بيوتهم و مدينتهم مع ورود أخبار تبث لديهم التفاؤل عن عمليات الجيش العربي السوري المتقدمة في حلب، مع يقينهم بأنهم مازالوا تحت سقف الوطن الواحد، و إن بصفة النزوح القسري".

"هو نزوح عن الجغرافيا ليس إلا، فالجسد قد تنقل أما الروح لم تفارق حدود الوطن في انتظار غد العدة، غد عودة الأمن و الأمان و الاستقرار إلى كل أرجاء الخارطة السورية، و إن غدا لناظره قريب".

957 24 December 2012. "يبقى حلم السوريين بالعودة إلى وطنهم بأسرع وقت ممكن".

958 30 March 2013. "يبقى أمل سكان تلك القرى بأن يعود الأمن و الأمان إلى سابق عهده و إزالة غيوم سوداء حملت معها الدم و الدمار إلى سوريا".

959 15 April 2013. "الدولة السورية و بالرغم من الظروف القاسية أعادت للنازحين أماكن للإقامة كما وفرت الخدمات الأساسية لهم".

960 24 December 2012. "مهام دورية متواصلة لاستقبال المواطنين و الردود على اتصالاتهم و حتى الإلكترونيات على مدار الساعة لحل المشكلات".

961 27 March 2013. "طرطوس تستقبل النازحين من المحافظات السورية و الدولة توفر لهم جميع احتياجاتهم".

displaced people. The voice tones of journalists did not denote the hardships which these displaced people inside the country suffer. The voice tones of the reporters were stable, with medium speed which makes the recipients feel that there was a displacement crisis, yet it was under control and treatment.

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The government seeks to secure the needs of the displaced people inside Syria.<sup>963</sup>

Al-Manar covered the displaced people's situation only in Lattakia and Tartous. These two governorates were under the control of the government forces. The channel's correspondents mentioned that there was a typical situation of coexistence among the Syrians under a situation of aggravated provocative intercommunal tension which Syria is exposed to and which is being promoted. The correspondents denied that Syria was changing into sectarian and ethnic blocs<sup>964</sup>. "The Syrians are with the Syrians. This is what the street here says denying all what is being rumored about the disappearance of coexistence within the Syrian society, and the pains resulting from the events remain restricted inside the national unity."<sup>965</sup>

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A displaced woman from Aleppo to Tartous talks about the crimes of the armed groups. The journalist chose a green garden to talk to her. In the Syrian and Arab culture, the green color is considered a symbol of rest and relaxation. Highlighting this color in the image may reduce the severity of the message's effect about the difficulties of displacement.<sup>966</sup>

963 27 March 2013.

964 27 March 2013.

965 27 March 2013. "السوريون للسوريين، هذا ما يقوله الشارع هنا، نافيًا كل ما يشاع عن ضرب للعيش المشترك بين ثلثي المجتمع السوري، ليبقى الألم الناتج عن الأحداث محصورًا بين أضلاع الوحدة الوطنية".

966 27 March 2013.

However, concerning the external refuge, Al-Manar did not find it embarrassing to magnify the situation of the refugees; this is not the responsibility of the Syrian authorities outside the borders of Syria. "Al-Zaatari Camp for the Syrian refugees in Jordan, a catastrophic situation"<sup>967</sup>, "In Al-Zaatari Camp, where the Syrians running away from the homeland had gathered, the remnants of dignity were drowned with the fall of rain. The water expelled the population out into the open space in such a way that the scene became more miserable. The refugees were left to face their destiny without noticing any movement by the international and Arab actors which established the camp under the title of relieving the suffering of the refugees."<sup>968</sup> This is an implicit criticism of the Arab and international policies which criticize the Syrian government. Id est, Al-Manar wants to state: 'How can these Arab and international actors criticize the Syrian government's carelessness about the suffering of the people while they do not provide any support to the refugees abroad? Simultaneously, Al-Manar tries to retort the opposition's propaganda concerning gaining Arab and international support on the service and humanitarian levels.

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The children in the refugee camps outside Syria.<sup>969</sup>The children in the refugee camps outside Syria.<sup>970</sup>

### Interviews with refugees and displaced people

Al-Manar's correspondents interviewed some of the displaced people in Syria and some of the refugees in bordering countries like Jordan and Lebanon.

<sup>967</sup> 11 January 2013. "مخيم الزعتري للسوريين في الأردن، حالة كارثية".

<sup>968</sup> 11 January 2013.

"في مخيم الزعتري الذي اجتمع فيه السوريون الهاربون من الوطن غرق ما تبقى من كرامة مع هطول الأمطار، فطردت المياه السكان إلى العراء ليزداد المشهد بؤساً. فاللاجئون تركوا في مواجهة مصيرهم من دون ملاحظة أي تحرك من قبل الجهات النولية و العربية التي أنشأته تحت عنوان تخفيف معاناة اللاجئين".

<sup>969</sup> 11 January 2013.

<sup>970</sup> 11 January 2013.

The discourse content of the displaced people in Syria is almost completely different from that of the refugees outside the country. The content of the displaced people's discourse in the interior of Syria was centered on the assaults of the armed groups and terrorists on the citizens and their committing of expulsion operations against the Syrians. All the women were wearing *hijab*, which denotes that the armed groups assault the Sunni sect and that the government is the one which provides security to this sect. The implied intention of this is facing the opponent propaganda about the regime's sectarianism (a Shiite – Alawite regime) and about its assault of the Sunni sect.

A woman talked about the difference in Syria between the situation before and after the crisis: "We used to go out of our homes at any time even at 4 after midnight. When these came, we were lost."<sup>971</sup> This means that the security and safety prevailed all over the country before the crisis; they were not afraid to leave their homes at any time because they were sure that they will not be exposed to anything wrong. However, because of the armed groups, the citizens were obliged to migrate from their areas and scatter here and there on the Syrian land looking for safety. We notice that the woman used the demonstrative expression 'these' to refer to the combatants. This suggests her disgust to mention any name or description of the armed opposition. Therefore, she substituted the labels by using the demonstrative pronoun. In Syria, the personal and demonstrative pronouns are sometimes used instead of names and adjectives to express disparaging or scorning a particular person or party.

Other women talked about the torture methods the combatants used against them and their families: "They put me in the middle. They undressed me and took out my own head cover"<sup>972</sup>, "I was pregnant. They aborted me"<sup>973</sup>, "They hit my son because he tried to save me."<sup>974</sup> These are indications of the brutality and immorality of the armed opposition. A woman said: "We reached a stage when Jabhat Al-Nusra threatened to kill my husband. They wanted us to sell the store and give it to Jabhat Al-Nusra so that they could kill the soldiers who were protecting us."<sup>975</sup> This is a significance of the popular objection to the actions of Jabhat Al-Nusra that a group of channels, one of which was Al-Jazeera channel, used to promote. The most prominent reason of this objection was the assaults of the opposition against the Syrian army that protected the civilians. This is an indication that the people respected and loved the army and that they were concerned that none of its soldiers might be harmed.

The number of men which Al-Manar interviewed was few in comparison with that of women. The discourse of these displaced people was divided into expressing their objection to the practices of the armed opposition, which involved non-Syrian combatants who came to assault and plunder the Syrians on the one hand, and talking about the difficulties they were facing like the difficulty

971 24 December 2012. "كنا نطلع الساعة 4 بالليل، لما أجو هحول شندلونا"

972 27 March 2013. "حطوني بالنص عروني شلحوني إشاربي"

973 27 March 2013. "كنت حامل سقطوني"

974 27 March 2013. "ضربوا ابني لأنه حاول يفتني"

975 27 March 2013. "يعني نحن وصلنا لمرحلة زوجي تهدد بالقتل من جبهة النصرة، بئن نبيع المحل و نعطيه لجبهة النصرة مشان يقتلوا العساكر يلي كانوا عم يحمونا"

of finding a house on the other. However, every time they talked about a problem; they added a sentence that indicated that the government was trying to provide the displaced people with their needs. This shows the desire of Al-Manar to balance between talking about some difficulties of which the displaced suffer from and talking about the determination of the government and its responsibility towards the people.

Al-Manar's correspondents also interviewed some of the officials who had been assigned to provide the displaced people with their needs such as the governors of Tartous and Lattakia: "We opened a round-the-clock medical center for them, and an ambulance, of course. Even the special-needs children were serviced"<sup>976</sup>, "We are providing all the services for those who are in need."<sup>977</sup> The officials did not mention the difficulties which the displaced suffered from. Their discourse, rather, concentrated on the activities of the state to provide the care the displaced required till the situation became tranquil in the hot areas so that the immigrants could be able to go back to their homes.

The discourse of the refugees outside the country was totally different. Theirs was full of complaints. The tones of their voices were full of fear and anxiety. The features of the children were full of the agony of homelessness and deprivation. On the one hand, Al-Manar had to match the other channels which specified a large space to talking about the suffering of the refugees. On the other hand, if the channel had not covered the situation of the refugees, it would have seemed as an inhuman channel that did not care for the suffering and the pain and that only concentrates on the military situation. It was easy for the channel to give way to the refugees to express their agony as these declarations would be considered as criticism messages to all the countries which boasted of sympathizing with the Syrian people while they did not provide any real support.

A kid complains to Al-Manar's correspondent sobbing: "By God, the Greatest! By God, the Greatest! The blankets were all soaked with water. All of the blankets were soaked."<sup>978</sup> This kid has used the repetition method to assure his credibility and to give evidence of the size of suffering in winter.

"There is no support. There are no aids; nobody is helping us; there is no heating, no water. For bread, we make lines and buy it by our own money. We complain, but no Islam listens. The presidents are all against us."<sup>979</sup> This young man's discourse is similar to that of the opposition's: "No Islam hears, all the presidents are against us." Many Syrian opponents used to reiterate that the Islamic nation left them behind and did not support them in the face of the unjust and disbelieving ruler. However, this young man's appearance on Al-Manar's screen may suggest to the recipients that he is a supporter of the regime, or, at least, neutral. Yet his anti-regime tendency could be completely eradicated. This is another evidence that the means of conveying a message is able of changing the meaning of this message in the mind of the recipient.

<sup>976</sup> 24 December 2012. "فتحنا لهم مركز طبي على مدار الساعة، و هناك سيارة إسعاف طبعاً، حتى أنه تم تأمين الأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة."

<sup>977</sup> 24 December 2012. "عم نقوم بتقديم جميع الخدمات لمحتاجيها."

<sup>978</sup> 11 January 2013. "والله العظيم، والله العظيم، أنه كانت البطانيات كلها مي، كل البطانيات مي."

<sup>979</sup> 11 January 2013. "مافي مساعدات، ما جدا عم يساعدنا، ما في نفقة، ما في مي، الخبز عم نصف عالذور، عم نشتره مشترى من مصرياتنا، عم نشكي و ما في اسلام يسمع، الرساء كلها ضدنا."

Al-Manar recalled declarations of Syrian refugees in Jordan which were transmitted on a British channel. The women expressed the state of fear which they suffer from because of the assaults and the violations they are exposed to: "It is not fear. It is horror. In the tent, I lived a state of terror; everybody in the tent was sleeping except for me. I couldn't sleep"<sup>980</sup>, "They kidnapped a lot of girls and exploited them."<sup>981</sup> This is an indication of sexual assault against women.

Some Syrian men also expressed their disgust of Saudi and Qatari men, who availed of the suffering of the Syrian refugee females so that they could sexually get them, in the pretext of marrying them. "So what? Do they look at us as if we were in a sales market? A sheep sales market? If we are penniless, does this mean that you want to exploit us?!"<sup>982</sup> This is a declaration of a father who got angry with the Saudis and Qataris, who proposed to marry his daughters although these men were much older than his daughters. He was angry because they proposed to pay a lot of money as a price of his agreeing to let his daughters get married to them. He wonders if his daughters were like the sheep ready to be bought and sold. Al-Manar's implicit purpose of recalling this type of declarations is criticizing KSA and Qatar which support the armed opposition with money and weapons. Al-Manar highlights the immorality of these two countries through showing the Qatari and Saudi societies which consider the Syrian females as a prey which is easy to attack. Al-Manar challenges KSA and Qatar through recalling videos transmitted on foreign channels. The implied goal of this is saying: 'Behold! It's not we, who accuse your peoples of filthiness and exploiting the suffering of others, they are, rather, channels which are known for criticizing the Syrian regime'.

Some women expressed their grief because these Saudis and Qataris are too bold to disparage them and make them feel that they are cheap goods ready to be sold: "There, they dreamed to marry Syrian women, but things have reached the worst and the days have turned black, so it became easy for them to marry Syrian females."<sup>983</sup> That is, before the crisis, Saudis and Qataris wished Syrian women had accepted to get married to them. This was like an inaccessible dream for them; however, due to the crisis, and because women had to refuge to countries which were careless about their services and humanitarian conditions, it became easy for these Saudis and Qataris to dare to buy Syrian females.

### 3. The Humanitarian and Service Results

#### 3.1. Infrastructure and Services

Al-Manar tried to make the recipients feel optimistic. At the same time, it adopted a method which was able to polish the government's image more and more. "The government institutions

<sup>980</sup> 30 March 2013. "ممن خوف، رعب، حياة رعب عشت بالخيمة، كل الناس نائمة إلا أنا ما أقدر نام."

<sup>981</sup> 30 March 2013. "خطفوا كثير بنات خطفوهن و شغلوهن."

<sup>982</sup> 30 March 2013. "يعني شو شايفينا نحن بسوق بيع؟ سوق غم؟ شايفين ما معنا فلوس يعني خلص بدكن تستغلونا؟!"

<sup>983</sup> 30 March 2013. "كانوا هنالك يحلموا يتزوجوا سورية، لكن وصلت فينا الأمور، و اسودت الأيام و صار فين ياخذو سوريين."

promise to rehabilitate the city and some burnt institutions in a few days in addition to cleansing the city and elimination of checkpoints and providing the living needs of people"<sup>984</sup>, "Units of the army are performing cleaning operations of the city"<sup>985</sup>, "The Syrian army settled the matter. The workshops of bringing normal life back to the city has been launched; the streets are being cleaned, the services are being gradually brought back, and the oil pipes which were exposed to sabotage actions on a large extent are being repaired."<sup>986</sup> By this method the recipients understand that there is devastation and destruction. However, the impact of the news will not be that big as the essence of the piece of information is that the government is soon going to treat all the problems resulting from the clashes or from the assaults of the combatants. In other words, Al-Manar does not deny that there is destruction yet it does not want to talk directly about it. Therefore, the channel puts it in an optimistic context, a context which makes the recipients feel the credibility of Al-Manar – i.e. it is covering the devastation – but at the same time, the pro-regime recipient feels that things are going to be well as soon as possible. This method is important in the psychological war. Al-Manar's pro-regime audience may get a great optimistic energy through the contexts and the news formulas which the channel selects<sup>987</sup>.

"These scenes reinforced the feeling of tranquility in the souls of the people of the city of Jisr Al-Shughour who started to make their way back to their own villages and homes."<sup>988</sup> These 'scenes' refers to cleaning the streets and eliminating the remnants of destruction, which is an optimistic context that blasts the mental image of the suffering of the refugees and that of devastation.

"The return of normal life"<sup>989</sup>, a phrase which has an optimistic character, was reiterated 5 times. Here is an implicit admission that life was not normal in some governorates and regions, yet Al-Manar did not explicitly state that there were huge life difficulties. The channel always aimed at sustaining a high morale which was confident of victory. "The return of communication"<sup>990</sup> has an implied admission that the services were not available. Al-Manar did not cover the communication or electrical power cut-outs and did not highlight the suffering of the people resulting from the cut-out of services. However, the channel covered the positive events – the communication return and so on – with the aim of conveying optimism and providing an image of the Syrian state's ability to treat the crisis on all levels, whether they were military, political, economic or services.

984 11 August 2011. "المؤسسات الحكومية تُعدّ بتأهيل المدينة و بعض المؤسسات المحروقة فيها خلال أيام، فضلا عن تنظيف المدينة و رفع الحواجز و تأمين حاجيات الناس المعيشية".

985 20 June 2011. "وحدات من الجيش تقوم بعمليات تنظيف للمدينة".

986 05 March 2012.

987 "حسم الجيش السوري الأمر، أُنشئت المجموعات المسلحة، و أطلقت ورشة لإعادة الحياة الطبيعية إلى المدينة، تنظيف للشوارع و عودة تدريجية للخدمات، و إصلاح لأنابيب النفط التي كانت عرضة لأعمال تخريب على نطاق واسع".

988 This is what the researcher noticed through close contact with pro-government slices which continually watch Al-Manar and the different pro-regime channels.

988 20 June 2011. "هذه المشاهد عززت الطمأنينة في نفوس أهالي مدينة جسر الشغور الذين بدأوا بشق دروب العودة إلى قراهم و منازلهم".

989 "عودة الحياة الطبيعية".

990 01 December 2012. "عودة الإتصالات".

"Al-Manar examined the conditions of the citizens who resumed their daily activities."<sup>991</sup> This is a denotation of the presence of Al-Manar's correspondents among the civilians – the ground. The goal of this denotation is challenging the opponent propaganda concerning the hatred of the Syrian people of the government; because the citizens' acceptance of communicating with Al-Manar's correspondents implicitly means their acceptance of the regime's policy.

Al-Manar only adopted the method of magnifying destruction when the armed groups were the only responsible side for it. In plain English, the destruction resulting from the battles between the government forces and the combatants was only very accidentally a media theme for Al-Manar. Whereas, the images of the explosions of the opponent armed forces or their other military practices were a prominent theme. Al-Manar was not at all embarrassed to introduce the images which showed huge destruction in the quarters, in Islamic, Christian and Jewish religious centers, in markets, and in the archaeological centers because the channel always linked the enormous destruction to the practices of the opposition – i.e. the regime was clean-handed.

(44-45)



An image after battle where Al-Manar avoids showing the scenes of the immense destruction.<sup>992</sup>



An image after battle where Al-Manar avoids showing the scenes of the immense destruction.<sup>993</sup>

<sup>991</sup> 22 June 2013. "تفتت كاميرا المنار أحوال المواطنين الذين استأنفوا أعمالهم اليومية".

<sup>992</sup> 01 March 2012.

<sup>993</sup> 01 March 2012.



### 3.2. The Economic Situation

Talking about the economic suffering of the Syrian citizen was not a priority of Al-Manar's. There were many contexts through which the channel tackled this theme: For example, the channel talked about an initiative which a group of the Syrian young people performs. The purpose of this initiative was securing food supplies and providing them to the people of a Damascene quarter – namely, Al-Maidan: "Foodstuffs in addition to cereals, gas cylinders and other daily goods were distributed to the homes of Al-Maidan. This caused a feeling of ease mingled with wishes in the souls of the citizens of this Damascene quarter."<sup>994</sup> This is an optimistic context which does not contain sentences that directly indicate the suffering of the people. The people were relieved and felt hopeful after they saw that these goods were available. This suggests that Al-Manar could not absolutely deny that there was an economic crisis. Therefore, this channel had to create a balance between showing its credibility – covering different sides of the crisis – and sticking to providing an image of the stability, albeit a partial one, in Syria. Magnifying the economic suffering of the citizen would lead to shaking the confidence of the regime supporters in victory. "This youth initiative isn't going to stop in Al-Maidan Quarter. The return of life to the streets of the capital will go hand in hand with other initiatives in the different Damascene quarters which were fields of chasing the armed groups by the Syrian army."<sup>995</sup> This is a significance which has three goals. The first is assuring the Syrian citizens that the food supplies are going to be available. The second is introducing an image of the popular cohesion and cooperation – the young citizens secure these items to other citizens. The third goal is justifying this economic instability; the army is chasing the combatants – defending the homeland. This justification may indirectly suggest to the recipient that the Syrian citizen has to be patient. In plain English, securing the foodstuffs and the food supplies is important, yet the victory of the army and the elimination of the terrorist groups are more important.

"The Syrians rush to the state's Consumer Establishments running away from the wave of the rise in prices which prevails over the markets these days. At every visit, they find what saves them more cost and more increase in prices."<sup>996</sup> Using the verb "rush" suggests that the Syrians go quickly, in a state of confusion, to the state's establishments that are considered their safe economic shelter which protects them from the private market that does not take into consideration the circumstances which the crisis imposed. Al-Manar has shot two targets with one arrow; it has talked about the people's suffering and kept the image of the government shining, clean and impartial – the state is like the warmhearted mother.

"On its side, the government is exerting tremendous efforts to secure the basic items in these establishments at reasonable prices which do not have profit as a target despite the high cost which results from that."<sup>997</sup>

<sup>994</sup> 26 July 2012. "مواد غذائية إضافة إلى الحبوب و قوارير الغاز و غيرها من السلع اليومية كانت تمر على بيوت الميدان ما أرحى ارتياحا ممزوجا بالأمنيات لدى أهالي الحي الدمشقي."

<sup>995</sup> 26 July 2012.

"إن هذه المبادرة الشبابية لن تتوقف في حي الميدان، إذ أن عودة الحياة إلى شوارع العاصمة ستتلائم مع مبادرات أخرى تجاه الأحياء المختلفة في دمشق، و التي كانت ساحة لملاحقة الجيش السوري للمجموعات المسلحة".

<sup>996</sup> 16 July 2013. "يهرع السوريون إلى مؤسسات الدولة الاستهلاكية هربا من موجة الغلاء التي تعم الأسواق هذه الأيام، حيث يجدون في كل زيارة ما يوفر عليهم مزيدا من الكلفة و ارتفاع الأسعار."

<sup>997</sup> 16 July 2013. "الحكومة من جانبها تبذل جهودا كبيرة لتوفير المواد الأساسية في هذه المؤسسات بأسعار معقولة لا تتوخى الربح رغم التكلفة التي تتربط على ذلك."

"The fluctuations of the exchange price of the dollar allow some manipulative merchants to impose the prices they desire, while the state's establishments stick to the prices set by the government, which makes the number of their customers outdo that of the markets to a large degree. In exceptional circumstances like these which the Syrians go through the legal reference might sometimes be absent so that a moral and fideist one may replace it."<sup>998</sup> This is an indication whose goal is acquitting the government from being the cause of a rise in prices and blaming the private sector which does not respect the suffering of the Syrians.

"Crowdedness here has its reasons and standing in a long line to pay for the purchases is easier for these people than the burning fire of the rise in the prices outside."<sup>999</sup> That is to say, the citizens prefer to resort to the state's establishments even if they had to stand in queues and wait for a long time due to crowdedness. We notice here that Al-Manar has always linked the economic suffering and the ability of the state's establishments to secure the people's needs. The channel only mentioned that there was an economic problem in the context of talking about the state's efforts in securing the needs of the people. "In spite of the circumstances, the Syrian government continues to support and secure bread to all the citizens."<sup>1000</sup> This is a message to confront the opponent propaganda concerning the regime's bombing of bakeries.

"Despite the blockade and turbulences which Syria has suffered from, the Syrian government cares for securing the basic items for the citizen and the most important of these is bread. The difficulty of securing this item, which was rumored to have high rise in its price, is almost a result of crowdedness and of the fact that some bakeries were out of service in Damascus Suburb because of the security situation."<sup>1001</sup> This is an explicit and direct defiance of the opponent propaganda. It is a new signifier of Al-Manar's linking the existence of an economic crisis to the government's serious attempts to secure the living requirements.

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The government seeks to secure the needs of the displaced people in spite of the difficulties.<sup>1002</sup>

998 16 July 2013.

"تقلبات سعر صرف الدولار في سوريا تسمح لبعض المتلاعبين من التجار بوضع الأسعار التي يرغبون بها، فيما تلتزم مؤسسات الدولة بتعرفة الحكومة ما يجعل زبائنهم يفوقون رواد الأسواق بكثير في ظروف كهذه الظروف الإستثنائية التي يمر بها السوريون قد تغيب المرجعية القانونية أحيانا لتحل محلها مرجعية أخلاقية وإيمانية".

"الإكتظاظ هذا له ما يبرره، والوقوف في رتل طويل لنفع قيمة المشتريات أهون عند هؤلاء من نار الغلاء خارجا".

999 11 November 2013. "رغم الظروف، الحكومة السورية تستمر في دعم وتأمين مادة الخبز لكافة المواطنين".

1000 21 December 2013.

1001 21 December 2013. "بالرغم مما أصاب سوريا من حصار واضطرابات، تهتم الحكومة السورية بتوفير المواد الأساسية للمواطن وأهمها الخبز، هذه المادة التي أشيع عن إرتفاع باهظ في سعرها، تكاد معاناة الحصول عليها تتركز على الإزدحام وخروج بعض الأفران عن الخدمة في ريف دمشق بسبب الوضع الأمني".

1002 16 July 2013.

Al-Manar's discourse which deals with the economic crisis was totally different when the armed opposition's practices were the direct cause of this crisis. "The inhabitants of the two villages suffer from a severe lack of food supplies and a permanent power cut-out because of the blockade which has been imposed on them for months under the pretext that the people support the Syrian government as the armed people claim"<sup>1003</sup>, "The people of the quarter did not bear the blockade which these groups impose on the west part of the city where the Syrian army exists. So, they went out in a demonstration demanding to put an end to it and to allow the foodstuffs and the medical items to enter to the civilians who suffer from a severe humanitarian crisis, especially the children."<sup>1004</sup> Al-Manar magnified the suffering of the Syrians under the blockade of the armed groups. This means that the channel magnified the events in the areas which were controlled by the opposition and that it made the suffering seem simple in the areas which were controlled by the regime's forces. This indicates that the purpose of highlighting the suffering of the citizens was not supporting the people and creating a true compassion towards them, but the purpose was supporting the government propaganda concerning the criminality of the terrorist groups.

Al-Manar's correspondents interviewed Syrian officials such as heads of consumer establishments, heads of bakeries and ministers. The content of their discourse about the economic suffering was different in accordance to the regions they talked about. In other words, if the city or region was under the control of the government, the officials' discourse would have an optimistic characteristic, a discourse which praises the government's achievements and its attempt to secure services. However, if the city was under the control of the armed opposition, the officials' discourse would have a magnifying characteristic that suggests a disastrous suffering which has to be faced and immediately treated.

### 3.3. Life is Normal and Peaceful in Spite of Everything

In order to raise the morale, Al-Manar assured that, despite the difficult security circumstances which the Syrian people experience and suffer from, the citizens face and defy these difficulties through insisting on their regular activities such as going to parks and recreation places. "The Syrians have a great will of living; they insist to live the details of the Holy Month surpassing their security circumstances."<sup>1005</sup> The Holy Month means the month of Ramadan. In other words, the Syrians continue practicing the religious and recreation rituals which they used to practice before the crisis such as going out to restaurants, and having the meals of *Suhour* and *Iftar*<sup>1006</sup> with friends

"سكان القريتين يعانون نقصا حادا من المواد التموينية و انقطاعا دائما للتيار الكهربائي بسبب الحصار المفروض عليهم منذ أشهر، تحت ذريعة أن الأهالي يؤيدون الحكومة السورية كما يدعي المسلحون". 1003 11 February 2013.

1004 10 July 2013.

"أهالي الحي لم يتحملوا الحصار الذي تفرضه هذه الجماعات على غرب المدينة حيث يتواجد الجيش السوري، فخرجوا في تظاهرة تطالب بإنهاء و بضرورة إدخال المواد الغذائية و الطبية إلى المدنيين الذين يعانون من أزمة إنسانية حادة، و بالأخص الأطفال".

"إرادة الحياة عند السوريين كبيرة، يصرون على أن يعيشوا تفاصيل الشهر الفضيل، متعاليين على ظروفهم الأمنية". 1005 28 July 2013.

1006 *Iftar* is the meal Muslims have at sunset after fasting all the day. *Suhour* is the meal Muslims have before *Fajr* call for prayer after which they stop eating or drinking anything until sunset.

and family. "They eat the most delicious foods"<sup>1007</sup> is a statement which denotes that there is not any true suffering as the people go out to have their meals in restaurants happily and relaxingly. This discourse gives the channel two different characteristics. The first is: Al-Manar is totally detached from reality. The second is: Al-Manar is a truthful channel that presents the truth and confronts the channels which try to magnify the Syrian crisis. Branding the coverage of Al-Manar with characteristics differs according to the political affiliation of the recipients; the pro-regime ones may feel that Al-Manar is the channel of truth. However, according to the opponents, it is untruthful, disconnected from reality, and serves the regime without any moral restraint<sup>1008</sup>.

### 3.4. Interviews with the Citizens about the Services and Humanitarian Suffering

The discourse of some citizens included complaints about the unavailability of the essential materials of living such as foodstuffs and the heating materials. However, the context in which these declarations were put was a survey of the practices of the terrorist groups. In this way, Al-Manar, shows that it is not indifferent about the fact that there were living difficulties, yet, simultaneously, it acquitted the regime of the charges against it about making the people hungry and poor – the armed groups were responsible for the hardships of life.

A Syrian citizen said: "The bakery in our area is closed due to electrical power cut-out, and we do not have bread. When the army came, security and assuredness came back, thank God!"<sup>1009</sup> id est, the opposition's armed people caused the power cut-out and the entrance of the army brought normal life back and secured the services.

A veiled Syrian woman said: "By God! Bread is easily available and the bread bundle is for 15 Syrian Pounds. The citizens are welcome to get it. There is nothing wrong. They are all biased channels which hate us."<sup>1010</sup> This citizen tried to defy the opponent propaganda by stating that the price of bread has not changed and that this foodstuff is easily available. The woman mentioned the anti-regime channels as if she were telling Al-Manar's correspondent: 'We know why you are interviewing us about bread, and here we are answering the way you want us to, and showing the reality from another viewpoint.' Many women assured that the bread crisis was fake and that reality tells the contrary; everything is abundant and available.

The men's discourse sometimes contained complaints of the inability to get bread easily. However, the reason was the Syrians themselves; some people bought a large number of bread bundles from the state's bakeries and sold them to people for much higher prices. In this way, Al-Manar shows that it does not deny the existence of a food crisis. However, it, simultaneously, keeps showing the innocence and irresponsibility of the regime for this shortcoming.

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1007 28 July 2013. "يتناولون ما طاب من الطعام"

1008 The researcher's observation.

1009 11 August 2013. "عنا القرن مسكر بسبب قطع الكهرباء و ما عنا خبز، و من إجاتنا الجيش إجاتنا الأمان والإطمئنان، والحمد لله"

1010 21 December 2013. "والله الخبز متوفر بكل سهولة، و ربة الخبز ب 15 ليرة، و المواطن عم يجيبها بكل رحابة صدر، و لا في شيء، كلها قنوات مغرضة بتكرهنا"

Some women said that they hoped things to return as they were before the crisis: "By God! I only hope that our country may be as it was. I mean security and peace and everything. However, the most important thing is peace. We want peace."<sup>1011</sup> This is an implicit denotation that the regime used to secure safety and stability to the people and that the opponent popular movement led to corrupting everything. The Syrians hope that stability may be back. That is, the State may regain its control over everything.

Some citizens expressed their contentedness with the State's establishments which provide the people with goods and foodstuffs for the least prices. The voice tone of the citizens and the content of their discourse suggest to the recipients that the concerns of the Syrian citizen are very simple. They are not as the anti-regime channels show them. Al-Manar implicitly states: 'Look! This is how the Syrians think. It is not a news formulation which is controlled by the channel's administration; it is the truth, that is how the Syrian people are.'

Many women wearing *hijab* expressed their desire to enjoy life in spite of all what was going on: "We, particularly the Damascene people, love life. God will, we will go on. There is nothing. We love entertainment, we love joy. God will, everything will be well. I mean everything will come to an end, and, God will, things won't last the way they are."<sup>1012</sup> This woman states that there is no crisis "There is nothing" as many opponent channels claim. The importance of the declaration of this woman lies in the fact that she represents the Sunni sect which the opponent media portrays as a rebelling one against the government which depresses it, bombs it, and assaults its women. The confidence of this woman that everything will come to an end signifies her confidence in the ability of the State to control the crisis and to regain security and stability. This quotation also indicates that the citizens were enjoying a life full of joviality before the crisis – the regime is the source of stability.

(47-48)



The veiled women (Sunni hijab) emphasize their happiness despite the difficult circumstances; they talk about eating the most delicious foods in restaurants.<sup>1013</sup>

1011 26 July 2012. "و الله ما بتمنى غير يرجع بلدنا مثل ما كان، يعني أمان وسلام و كل شي، و أهم شي السلام بدنا السلام"

1012 28 July 2013. "نحن أهل الشام بالتحديد منحب الحياة، و بدنا نكمل بإذن الله، مافي شي، منحب البسط و منحب الفرح، و على خير إن شاء الله، يعني كل شي حبيتي ما حنضل هيك بإذن الله"

1013 28 July 2013.

"We say: 'May God bring things to a state of tranquility!' May God protect the Syrian people and the Syrian army! And may God protect the president Bashar Al-Assad for us!"<sup>1014</sup> This is a veiled woman's answer to a question about the nature of the situation in Syria. The woman did not explicitly talk about the difficulties, but prayed to God to make things tranquil – implied admission of tiredness because of the situation. Then, she complimented the Syrian people and army. She also prayed to Allah to protect the president, which is an indication that the return of stability is connected to the operations of the Syrian army under the leadership of the president Al-Assad. Her compliment of the Syrian people is a significance of the cohesion of the Syrians in the face of this crisis.

Al-Manar portrayed that the people are able to challenge the difficulties and to confront the conspiracy, that the Syrians are patient and sure of victory, and that they go on with practicing their daily activities as a form of defiance and standing still.

## What Are the Ethnicities and the Religious Sects Al-Manar Highlighted?

### 1. The Sunni Sect

Al-Manar depicted that the Muslims who belong to the Sunni sect support the government. In order to portray this image, Al-Manar adopted many methods. Firstly, recalling declarations of religious icons such as excerpts from the sermons of Mohamed Said Ramadan Al-Bouti<sup>1015</sup> in mosques: "The scholar Mohamed Said Ramadan Al-Bouti called to unity and refusing the *fitna* which some actors are trying to throw Syria into it."<sup>1016</sup> This is a signifier of the certainty of the most prominent religious leaders of the Sunni sect that there is a conspiracy against the Syrian government. It is also a significance of his absolute refusal that there is an honest peaceful revolution. Moreover, Al-Bouti's sermon contained a condemnation of the operations of recruiting mercenaries and sending them to Syria so as to explode, destroy, and eliminate security and peacefulness.

Al-Manar's correspondent commented on one of Al-Bouti's declarations: "Contrary to moderate Islamism which the religious institutes in Syria have always been teaching, there are many groups which entered the country including a takfiri current that practices its acts behind the mask of what is called the Sharia Board."<sup>1017</sup> This signifier which implicitly denotes that the Sunni sect – the moderate Islam – in Syria is a supporter of the regime, and that those, who allegedly claim being

<sup>1014</sup> 28 July 2013. "منقول الله يهذي الأمور، الله يحيي الشعب السوري و الجيش السوري و الله يخلي لنا الرئيس بشار الأسد."

<sup>1015</sup> He is considered one of the most important religious – Sunni – scholars across Syria, the Arab and Islamic world. During the crisis from 2011 to 2013, opinions were divided about him because of his attitudes supporting the Syrian government and refusing the popular movement. He was assassinated in March, 2013. The regime and the opposition exchanged charges concerning his assassination.

<sup>1016</sup> 27 April 2012. "العلامة محمد سعيد البوطي دعا إلى وحدة الصف و رفض الفتنة التي يحاول البعض زج سوريا بها."

<sup>1017</sup> 20 June 2013. "مقابل الإسلام الوسطي الذي دأبت المعاهد الدينية في سوريا على تدريسه، جماعات عديدة دخلت إلى البلاد ومن ضمنها تيار تكفيري يمارس أعماله تحت ستار ما يسمى بالهيئة الشرعية."

Muslims and fight the government under extremist, *salafi*, and *takfiri* Islamic flags, have come from outside the country.

Secondly, condensing highlighting the opinions of the women wearing the *hijab* which is specific of the Sunni sect<sup>1018</sup>. These women, who talk positively and express their support of the government and the Syrian armed forces, are Sunnis.

Thirdly, the dialects of the people who are talking with the correspondents. For example, the dialect of the Aleppine and Hamwi young men<sup>1019</sup> who support the government gives an impression of loyalty of the Sunni sect to the government as well.

Fourthly, the names of the regions. For instance, when Al-Manar's correspondent says that the people of Al-Maidan Quarter expressed their happiness on the return of the security and safety after the deployment of the Syrian army, the implied denotation is the loyalty of the Sunni sect to the regime because the majority of the residents of the Damascene Quarter, Al-Maidan, belong to the Sunni sect.

## 2. The Shiite Sect

Al-Manar did not talk about the situation of the Shiite sect explicitly, yet it used hinting and implication through many methods: First, talking about the role of the armed opposition in inflaming the sectarian *fitna*. Indicating that the armed people are killing on a sectarian basis, which is a significance that the combatants assault the people who belong to the religious minorities, specifically, the Twelver Shiite and Alawite sects. Secondly, the dialect of the Syrians who talk in the reportage. For example, the coastal dialect; it is an implied denotation which mainly refers to the attitude of the Alawites. The discourse content of the interviewers was often a sad one spoken in dialects which indicate that the speakers belong to the Shiite or Alawite sects and suggests the role of the victim, the role of those who have been assaulted by the gunmen. This shows that the Syrian revolutionary movement is not in favor of the minorities because it is based on a sectarian and denominational basis.

Thirdly, the names of the religious sites and regions like the shrines of Sayyidah Zaynab and Sayyidah Ruqayya<sup>1020</sup>, and the names of the villages of the Syrian coast – a large proportion of the residents of these areas belong to the Alawite sect. The context in which these names have been mentioned indicates the exposure of the Shiite symbols to assault and devastation by the armed opposition, or indicates the exposure of the villagers to murder and emigration by the combatants.

The reportages did not contain opinions of Alawite or Shiite sheikhs. The only declaration was that of one of the Syrian Shiite sheikhs whose uncle was exposed to a kidnapping operation by the armed groups: "Until now, we are still reassured that they are in good health. However, what concerns us, in addition to his Eminence and the safety of his Eminence, the safety of the rest of

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1018 There are some differences in the color and the way of wearing the *hijab* between the Sunni and the Shia sects.

1019 The citizens who reside in the governorates of Aleppo and Hama.

1020 Zaynab d/o Ali, the prophet's cousin, and Ruqayya d/o Al Hussein Bin Ali. These are important religious characters for the Shiite sect. These shrines lie in Damascus and its suburb.

the kidnapped women and kids whose number has exceeded a hundred and a few more."<sup>1021</sup> In addition to the desire to present the Shiite sect as a victim of the terrorist armed people, there is an additional purpose of highlighting this: The sheikh does not only worry about – the Eminence- of his kidnapped uncle, but he is also concerned about all the kidnapped people at the same degree. This is a signifier that the value of the religious leaders is equal to the rest of the people – the Shiite people represent justice and equality.

### 3. The Christians

Al-Manar portrayed that the Christians suffered from the oppression of the armed groups who assaulted them because of the sectarian classification and in order to mobilize the sectarian instincts<sup>1022</sup>. This is an implicit significance of the Christians' refusal of the opposing popular movement.

Al-Manar correspondents interviewed the families of kids and young men who had been killed by the terrorist groups. The citizens talked about the combatants' mechanisms of killing and about the kidnapping operations. The tones of their voices were full of extreme grief and assured the part of Christians as victims.

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The gunmen's targeting of the Christian people – a woman is crying because of the death of her son who was murdered without cause.<sup>1023</sup>

Al-Manar also interviewed several archbishops whose discourse contained a pro-regime character whether explicitly or implicitly. "It's not only Sari. There are many others like Sari from the Al-Abrashiya family, who passed away in the cause of the homeland."<sup>1024</sup> This is a denotation of the large number of the Christians who were murdered by the combatants. "They passed away in the cause of the homeland" is an indication of the patience of the Christians, who are loyal to their homeland. It also implicitly denotes that the opposition is the enemy of the Syrian homeland, an enemy of the mutual living.

"إلى الآن نحن لا نزال مطمئنين أنهم بصحة جيدة، و لكن الذي يهمنا بالإضافة لسلامته و سلامة سماعته بنية المخطوفين و المخطوفات، من حرائر و أطفال صغار ناهز عددهم المئة و قليلا". 1021 10 August 2013.

1022 02 December 2011.

1023 02 December 2011.

"موساري فقط في كثيرين من أمثال ساري عندي من عائلة الأبرشية و هودي راحو في سبيل الوطن". 1024 02 December 2011.



"I'm not an archbishop of a single category of the people. I mean I'm not an archbishop of the Christians only. I'm the archbishop of all the children of this homeland."<sup>1025</sup> This is a signifier of the unity of the Syrian people and the strength of co-existence. It also indicates that all the people are united in the face of the *takfiris*.

"They shoot us with the death missiles, the Mortar missiles, but we, as sons, are rooted in this country, deeply rooted sons because we are not extrinsic in the country. We are here on the side of our brothers in the rest of the society's slices completing the beautiful mosaic. Whatever they try or want, we are here and they won't be able to uproot us from this country. We'll hold tightly and keep rooting more and more and we'll defend the areas of our existence whatever the price is."<sup>1026</sup> This is a significance of the nationalism of the Christians and of the national unity in the face of terrorism and conspiracy. The discourse of the Christian clergymen many times contained assuring that there was no separation among the religions in Syria and that there was no hatred based on the difference of religious affiliations. This discourse is a message of confrontation of the opponent propaganda which charges the regime of sectarianism and of practicing dictatorship on the Syrian people on a denominational and sectarian basis – it is the terrorists who inflame sectarian and denominational hatred.

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The militant's murder of the Christian kids.<sup>1027</sup>

The Christian clergymen also expressed their suffering and inability to practice the worship rites due to the control of the combatants on churches and Christian worshipping centers. Albeit, they showed their confidence in the return of the security and peacefulness and in the elimination of the armed groups.

The channel often used the explicit and direct method to express the religious affiliation of the Christians: "On the Christian level, some armed people violated the archaeological village of Brad

<sup>1025</sup> 02 December 2011. "أنا ماتي مطران فئة وحدة، يعني ماتي مطران بس المسيحيين، أنا مطران كل أبناء هالوطن."

<sup>1026</sup> 23 November 2013.

"هم يقتلوننا بقذائف الموت، قذائف الهاون و لكن نحن كأبناء متجذرين في هذه البلاد، أبناء متأصلين لأننا لسنا بطارنيين على البلاد، نحن إلى جانب أخوتنا هنا في باقي شرائح المجتمع نتم هذه القسيءاء الجميلة. نحن مهما حاولوا و مهما أرادوا لن يقتلونا من هذه البلاد نحن سنتمسك و سنتجذر أكثر و أكثر و سندافع عن أماكن تواجدنا مهما كلف الثمن".

<sup>1027</sup> 02 December 2011.

north of Aleppo, devastated its church, and stole its contents before they defiled the Christian symbols in it as the residents of the village stated. The village contains the grave of Mar Maroon, who is considered the Patron Saint of the Maronite sect."<sup>1028</sup> The difference between Al-Manar's methods of covering the reality of the Christians – direct method – and covering the reality of the Islamic minorities like Shias and Alawites - implicit method – reflects the observance of the channel of the tension sensitivity among the Islamic sects, particularly the Sunnis and the Shias, and the ability of this sensitivity to double the hatred among the slices of the Syrian society.

#### 4. The Palestinians

In 2011, Al-Manar showed the support of the Palestinian refugees to Syria and their standing on its side against the external conspiracy<sup>1029</sup>. The channel recalled declarations of some Palestinian officials who expressed their refusal of any Arab resolution against Syria which stands still in the face of the imperialistic and Zionist projects whose target is controlling the treasures and the capabilities of the nation<sup>1030</sup>. "In this procession, all the people of the Camps express their support and loyalty to Syria which has always stood with the Arab right and with the Palestinian cause and which has been and still is the ever-pulsing heart of Arabism."<sup>1031</sup> The Palestinian officials have not employed the terms: 'the Syrian government or the regime', they have, rather, substituted that by the word 'Syria'. This endows the regime with high prestige and dignity.

However, in 2012 and 2013, the content of Al-Manar's discourse was different. The channel tried to confront the opponent propaganda about the enmity of the Palestinian refugees residing in Syria to the Syrian government and about their refusal of the practices of the Syrian military and security authorities: "Al-Yarmouk Camp<sup>1032</sup> is again exposed to the firing of the armed groups' bombarding and shooting by snipers whenever the Palestinian refugees get out expressing their refusal of the armed groups' practices."<sup>1033</sup> This is a signifier of the armed opposition's continuing assaults against the Palestinians. Al-Manar showed that the Palestinians strongly oppose the combatants without talking about the loyalty of these Palestinians to the Syrian government.

The channel pointed out that some actors were trying to incite the Palestinians to get involved in the Syrian crisis<sup>1034</sup>. "The Camp's authorities and residents assure that behind the targeting there are actors who try to deviate the Palestinians in Syria away from their main cause which is Jerusalem and the right of return. Pushing them into the darkness of the events is a service to Israeli

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1028 02 April 2013.

"على الصعيد المسيحي، كان مسلحون استباحوا في شباط فبراير الماضي قرية براد الأثرية شمال حلب حلب، و خربوا كنيستها، و سرقوا محتوياتها قبل تدنيس الرموز المسيحية فيها بحسب رواية أهالي المنطقة. و تضم القرية مدفن مار مارون الذي يعتبر شفيع الطائفة المارونية".

1029 15 November 2011.

1030 15 November 2011.

1031 15 November 2011. "وكل أبناء المخيمات يعبرون في مسيرتهم هذه عن دعمهم ووفائهم لسورية التي وقتت دوماً إلى جانب الحق العربي والقضية الفلسطينية وكانت وما تزال قلب العروبة النابض".

1032 One of the residence areas of the Palestinian refugees. It lies near Damascus.

1033 16 December 2012. "مخيم اليرموك مجدداً تحت نيران المجموعات المسلحة، قصفاً و قصفاً، كلما خرج اللاجئون الفلسطينيون فيه تعبيراً عن رفضهم لممارسات تلك المجموعات".

1034 16 December 2012.

and western projects."<sup>1035</sup> Strictly speaking, the real purpose of bombarding the Palestinians by the combatants is sidetracking them towards an assumed crisis so that they may forget their principal goal which is liberating Jerusalem and returning to their homeland – Palestine. All this is directed by foreign Zionist and western actors. This is an indication that the armed opposition is a part of a universal conspiracy against the Syrian homeland.

"The Palestinian People's Committees in Al-Yarmouk Camp charged the mass media, which are talking about the fall of their area under the control of the armed people of being a part of the international terrorism operations room which is directed against Syria and the Palestinian people."<sup>1036</sup> This is a significance that the Palestinians are aware that there is a conspiracy which targets the Arab Homeland and employs the power of the media – especially, the Arab media –to destroy the morale of both the Syrian and Palestinian peoples.

Generally speaking, Al-Manar's discourse shows that it wants to portray the Palestinians as a neutral party which does not interfere with the details of the Syrian crisis. Yet, at the same time, it is a party that is aware of the existence of a conspiracy which aims at the destruction of the Arab nation.

## 5. The Kurds

Al-Manar portrayed that the major target of the opposition combatants' assault on Kurds in Syria is practicing pressure on them due to their neutral attitude during the crisis in Syria so that they may push the Kurds to adopt a hostile policy against the Syrian government<sup>1037</sup>. The other target of the control of the opposition on the areas where the Kurds resided was securing the military and human reinforcements for the combatants as these areas were adjacent to Turkey. Strictly speaking, in case the armed opposition controlled these areas, the financing operations would become much easier.

Al-Manar confronted the opponent propaganda stating that the regime's airplanes targeted the Kurds. The channel portrayed that the main aim of the combatants' attacks against the Kurdish areas was drawing the Syrian army to fight battles there, and consequently, showing this army as an enemy of the Kurdish national constituent; therefore, this army intended to murder the Kurds and evacuate them outside the Syrian land. Many times, the channel highlighted the battles of the Kurds against the armed people of the opposition and talked about massacres which the combatants committed against the Kurds. However, the channel did not use words that showed the Kurds as

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1035 16 December 2012.

"فعاليات المخيم و سكانه يؤكدون أنه وراء الإستهداف جهات تسعى إلى حرق فلسطيني سوريا عن قضيتهم الأساس و هي القدس و حق العودة، و إدخالهم في ظلمة الأحداث خدمة لمشروع إسرائيلي و غريبه".

1036 16 December 2012.

"اللجان الشعبية الفلسطينية في مخيم اليرموك اتهمت الوسائل الإعلامية التي تتحدث عن سقوط منطقتهم بأيدي المسلحين بأنها جزء من غرة عمليات الإرهاب الدولي الموجهة ضد سوريا و الشعب الفلسطيني"

1037 09 November 2012.

victims; i.e. it did not employ sentimental enticement in favor of these Kurds. The fighter characteristic was the general feature of the Kurds. In other words, Al-Manar presented them as fighters who were independent from the Syrian government army forces; fighters who faced the combatants of the armed opposition in order to protect themselves.

In 2013, the channel highlighted the conflict of the Kurds and their battles against Jabhat Al-Nusra and ISIS. The prominent feature of these battles was that of continuity and perseverance.

Al-Manar did not name the dead people of the Kurds 'martyrs'. It rather branded them as 'murdered people/ casualty'. This is an implied denotation that Al-Manar wanted to be neutral concerning everything about the Syrian Kurdish situation. That is, its attitude towards the Kurdish pivot during the Syrian crisis was utterly different from its biased one towards both the Syrian armed forces and pro-regime slices of the Syrian people.

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## Al-Manar's Random Sample

Report Title in Arabic	Report Title in English	Report Date	Link Internet
سوريا تشكل لجنة للتحقيق في أحداث درعا "المؤسفة"	Syria forms a committee to investigate Daraa "unfortunate" events.	19/03/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=32293">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=32293</a>
تظاهرات مليونية مؤيدة للرئيس الأسد في كل أنحاء سورية	Million-man demonstrations in support of president Assad spread all over Syria.	29/03/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=32601">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=32601</a>
اعترافات الخلية السورية: النائب الجراح متورط و الأخير سيصدر بيانا	The confessions of the Syrian Cell: The parliament member Al-Jarrah is involved and the latter is going to issue a declaration.	13/04/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=33111">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=33111</a>
سانا: استشهاد شرطي سوري و إصابة 11 في تلبيسة	SANA: Martyrdom of a Syrian policeman and 11 injured in Telbisa.	18/04/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=33121">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=33121</a>
وزارة الداخلية السورية: تنظيمات سلفية تعيث بإسقاط سورية	Syrian Ministry of Interior: Salafi organizations are meddling around the independence of Syria.	19/04/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=33881">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=33881</a>
سورية: تشييع عدد من الضباط و عزل رئيس الأمن السياسي في بانياس	Syria: Funeral processions of a number of officers and discharging the head of Political Security Department in Banyas.	21/04/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=34111">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=34111</a>
سانا: استشهاد 5 من عناصر الأمن و جرح 5 آخرين بهجوم لمسلحين في درعا	SANA: Martyrdom of 5 security personnel and injuring 5 others in an attack by combatants in Daraa.	24/04/2011	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=34161">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=34161</a>
الجيش السوري يلاحق المجموعات الإرهابية المسلحة في درعا	The Syrian army chases the terrorist armed groups in Daraa.	01/05/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=35011">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=35011</a>
الجيش السوري يطلق عملية عسكرية في منطقة جسر الشغور	The Syrian army launches a martial operation in Jisr Al-Shughour's region.	10/06/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=40116">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=40116</a>
الجيش السوري يحكم سيطرته على جسر الشغور ويكتشف مقبرة جماعية	The Syrian army strongly controls Jisr Al-Shughour and discovers a mass grave.	13/06/2011	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=41466">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=41466</a>
مئات الآلاف يتظاهرون في دمشق رافعين أطول علم سوري (2300م) دعماً للرئيس الأسد	Hundreds of thousands demonstrate in Damascus raising the longest Syrian flag – 2300 m – in solidarity with president Al-Assad.	15/06/2011	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=42886">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=42886</a>
مقبرة جماعية وكميات من الأسلحة في جسر الشغور	A mass grave and amounts of weapons in Jisr Al-Shughour.	20/06/2011	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=43666">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=43666</a>
تظاهرات مليونية في سورية دعماً لمسيرة الإصلاح بقيادة الرئيس الأسد	Million-man demonstrations in Syria supporting the reform march led by president Al-Assad.	21/06/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=43866">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=43866</a>
صنّديا تايمز: مسلحون يشنون هجمات ضد القوات الحكومية السورية	Sunday Times: armed people attack the Syrian government forces.	27/06/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=44866">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=44866</a>
مسيرات رافضة للتدخل في شأن سورية.. وعودة مئات اللاجئين	Marches rejecting interference in the Syrian affairs	03/07/2011	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?from=al-dakad-08&amp;id=44866&amp;cat=44&amp;cat=72166">http://www.almanar.com.lb/article.php?from=al-dakad-08&amp;id=44866&amp;cat=44&amp;cat=72166</a>

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	and hundreds of refugees come back.		
عودة 265 سوريا من المخيمات التركية الى جسر الشغور	The return of 265 refugees from the Turkish camps to Jisr Al-Shughour.	04/08/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?news=2&amp;cat=2&amp;feed=2&amp;docid=2&amp;doc=98796">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?news=2&amp;cat=2&amp;feed=2&amp;docid=2&amp;doc=98796</a>
وحدات الجيش السوري تغادر مدينة حماه بعد إعادة الأمن والاستقرار إليها	The units of the Syrian army leave the city of Hama after restoring security and stability to it.	11/08/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?news=1&amp;cat=2&amp;doc=95796">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?news=1&amp;cat=2&amp;doc=95796</a>
سانا : إستشهاد 9 بينهم ضابط في كمين نصبته مجموعة إرهابية مسلحة وسط سورية	SANA: the martyrdom of nine personnel among which were officers in an ambush by an armed terrorist group in the middle of Syria.	04/09/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=100296">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=100296</a>
سورية أوقفت شحنة أسلحة مصدرها "اسرائيل" قادمة من لبنان	Syria seized an armament cargo coming from 'Israel' via Lebanon.	12/10/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=119116">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=119116</a>
سانا: ضبط اسلحة اسرائيلية في حمص.. ونفي اخبار قناة الجزيرة	SANA: seizing Israeli weapons in Homs and disproving Al-Jazeera channel's news.	29/10/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=117296">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=117296</a>
تظاهرة حاشدة في السويداء تأييداً للرئيس الأسد ودعماً للإصلاح	A massive demonstration in Suwaidaa in solidarity with president Assad and in support of reforms.	30/10/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=128116">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=128116</a>
سورية تلتف حول الأسد	Syria wraps around Al-Assad.	15/11/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=134111">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=134111</a>
الأمن السوري يلقى القبض على مسلحين ويضبط أسلحتهم	Syrian security arrests armed people and lays hand on their weapons.	27/11/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?news=1&amp;cat=2&amp;feed=2&amp;doc=2&amp;doc=141096">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?news=1&amp;cat=2&amp;feed=2&amp;doc=2&amp;doc=141096</a>
سورية.. أهالي الشهداء يؤكدون تمسكهم بالوحدة الوطنية ونبذ الفتنة	Syria: martyrs' families assure their strong hold of national unity and rejection of fitna.	02/12/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?news=1&amp;cat=2&amp;feed=2&amp;doc=2&amp;doc=14996">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?news=1&amp;cat=2&amp;feed=2&amp;doc=2&amp;doc=14996</a>
عشرات الشهداء والجرحى في تفجيرين إنتحاريين كبيرين في دمشق	Tens of martyrs and wounded people in two enormous suicide explosions in Damascus.	23/12/2011	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=154216">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=154216</a>
توقيت وأسلوب التفجيرين في قلب دمشق.. دلالات أمنية وسياسية	The timing and method of the two explosions in the heart of Damascus; security and political signifiers.	24/12/2011	<a href="http://archive.almasar.com/B-article.php?id=154916">http://archive.almasar.com/B-article.php?id=154916</a>
إصابة ضابطين كوئيتيين بجروح في سورية	Injuring two Kuwaiti officers in Syria.	10/01/2012	<a href="http://archive.almasar.com/B-article.php?id=160816">http://archive.almasar.com/B-article.php?id=160816</a>
المتظاهرون في دمشق : شعبنا أقوى من جيوشهم	Demonstrators in Damascus: Our people is stronger than their armies.	20/01/2012	<a href="http://archive.almasar.com/B-article.php?id=169916">http://archive.almasar.com/B-article.php?id=169916</a>
دمشق تتهم إرهابيين بتفجير عبوات ناسفة وخطأ لنقل النفط في حمص	Damascus charges terrorists of bursting explosive devices and a pipeline for transporting oil in Homs.	06/02/2012	<a href="http://archive.almasar.com/B-article.php?id=179916">http://archive.almasar.com/B-article.php?id=179916</a>
"جهاديون" يقتلون في "سورية". واستمرار الاشتباكات بين الأمن والجماعات المسلحة	"Jihadis" fight in Syria, clashes between security	12/02/2012	<a href="http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=183116">http://www.almasar.com/B-adsarb.php?id=183116</a>

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	personnel and the armed groups carry on."		
سورية: اشتباكات بين الجيش والمسلحين والقاء القبض على مطلوبين	Syria: Clashes between the army and the combatants and seizing wanted people.	20/02/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=151696">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=151696</a>
مقاتلون فرنسيون في حمص، وجوبيه للفصل: من يعيد لنا جنودنا؟	French fighters in Homs, and Juppé to Al-Faisal: "Who is to bring our soldiers back to us?"	28/02/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152386">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152386</a>
شهادات عن فظاعة جرائم المجموعات المسلحة في بابا عمرو	Testimonies of the ugliness of the armed groups' crimes in Baba Amr.	01/03/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152612">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152612</a>
السلطات السورية تحتجز ثلاثة عشر ضابطاً فرنسياً جرى توقيفهم في حمص	The Syrian authorities detain thirteen French officers who were caught in Homs.	05/03/2012	<a href="http://www.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152632">http://www.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152632</a>
حشود كبيرة في دمشق والحسكة دعماً للرئيس الأسد والإصلاحات	Large crowds in Damascus and Hasaka in support of president Al-Assad and reforms.	07/03/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152632">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152632</a>
عدد كبير من الشهداء والجرحى في تفجيرين ضربا دمشق	A large number of martyrs and injured people in two explosions which hit Damascus.	17/03/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152632">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152632</a>
سانا: السلطات السورية تحبط تسلل اراهابيين من تركيا	SANA: The Syrian authorities abort the infiltration of terrorists from Turkey.	26/03/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152766">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152766</a>
تسعة شهداء وعشرات الجرحى في انفجار استهدف حي الميدان في دمشق	Nine martyrs and tens of injured people in an explosion which targeted Al-Maidan Quarter in Damascus.	27/04/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152766">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152766</a>
تنظيم "القاعدة" يتبنى تفجيرات دمشق ومسلحون يهجون قرية بأكملها في حماه	Al-Qaida organization adopts the explosions of Damascus and armed people evacuate a whole village in Hama.	12/05/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836</a>
أهالي القبير يتهمون المجموعات المسلحة بالمجزرة	Al-Qubair people charge the armed groups for the massacre.	08/06/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836</a>
سورية.. مجموعة مسلحة تقتل 26 مواطناً وتمثل بجثثهم وتختطف آخرين في ريف حلب	Syria: an armed group murders 26 citizens and maims their dead bodies, and kidnaps others in suburb of Aleppo.	22/06/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836</a>
إستشهاد راجحة وشوكت وتوركمانى في تفجير انتحاري في مبنى الأمن القومي بدمشق	The martyrdom of Rajha, Shawkat and Turkmani in a suicide bombing in the building of National Security in Damascus.	18/07/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836</a>
أ.ف.ب : الجيش الحر يفشل بالسيطرة على معبر نصيب على الحدود السورية الأردنية	AFP: the Free Army fails to control the border crossing point of Naseeb between Syria and Jordan.	21/07/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836</a>
الجيش السوري يلاحق فلول المسلحين في دمشق	The Syrian army chases the remnants of the armed people in Damascus.	24/07/2012	<a href="http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836">http://archive.albamar.com.lb/article.php?id=152836</a>

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سورية.. هدوء في دمشق، ومعارك عنيفة في حلب	Syria: calm in Damascus and violent battles in Aleppo.	26/07/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=274249">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=274249</a>
الجيش السوري بدأ معركة حلب.. وإشتباكات عنيفة مع الجماعات المسلحة	The Syrian army has launched the battle of Aleppo and ferocious clashes with the armed groups.	28/07/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=275201">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=275201</a>
اشتباكات عنيفة في حلب والجيش السوري يكبد المسلحين خسائر فادحة	Fierce clashes in Aleppo and the Syrian army causes gross losses to the combatants.	01/08/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=275201">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=275201</a>
الجيش السوري بدأ هجومه البري على حلب وسيطر على حي صلاح الدين	The Syrian army has started its land attack on Aleppo and controlled Salahuddeen Quarter.	08/08/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281</a>
الجيش السوري الحر " " إجرام بلا حدود	The Free Syrian Army "boundless criminality".	15/08/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281</a>
تقدم للجيش في حلب وملاحقة للمسلحين في دير الزور ودراعا واللاذقية	An advance of the army in Aleppo and a chasing of the gunmen in Deir Ezzor, Daraa and Lattakia.	21/08/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281</a>
الجيش السوري دخل داريا.. وصور تظهر مجازر ارتكبتها المسلحون	The Syrian army enters Darayya and images that show massacres committed by the armed people.	26/08/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281</a>
الجيش السوري يواصل عملياته في ريف دمشق وحلب ويحبط هجوماً على مطار في ادلب	The Syrian army continues its operations in Damascus Suburb and Aleppo, and frustrates an attack on Idleb Airport.	29/08/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281</a>
الأحداث السورية: تحرير مخطوفين والعثور على سيارات مفخخة وأسلحة اسرائيلية	Syrian events: freeing kidnapped people and discovering a booby-trapped vehicle and Israeli weapons.	04/09/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=282281</a>
الجيش السوري يطهر الحجر الاسود بدمشق، وتحطم مروحية في دوما	The Syrian army sanitizes Al-Hajar Al-Aswad in Damascus, and a helicopter crashes in Douma.	20/09/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=310211">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=310211</a>
الجيش السوري يكسب المزيد من مناطق المسلحين في حلب ويتصدى لمحاولات تسلل من لبنان	The Syrian army gains more areas from the combatants in Aleppo, and confronts infiltration attempts from Lebanon.	29/09/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=317331">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=317331</a>
عشرات الضحايا في سلسلة تفجيرات ضربت ساحة سعد الله الجابري وسط حلب	Tens of victims in a series of explosions hitting Saadallah Al-Jabiri Square in the center of Aleppo.	03/10/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=317331">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=317331</a>
المسلحون السوريون ينتهكون الهدنة	The combatants violate the truce.	26/10/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=334211">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=334211</a>
المنار في قرية ربله السورية بريف القصير	Al-Manar in the Syrian Rabla village, Al-Qusair suburb.	28/10/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=335251">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=335251</a>



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تفجير في دمشق وشريط فيديو يظهر تصفية 28 سوريا	An explosion in Damascus, and a video footage that shows the liquidation of 28 Syrians.	02/11/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=35891">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=35891</a>
مسلحون يقتحمون بلدة كردية في الحسكة ومجزرة في دير الزور	Armed people break into Kurdish town in Hasaka, and a massacre in Deir Ezzor.	09/11/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36441">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36441</a>
منذبة ينفذها المسلحون في رأس العين شمال سورية	A massacre committed by the armed people in Ras Al-Ain in the north of Syria.	14/11/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36891">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36891</a>
تظاهرات "معارضة" في سورية ترفع شعار: "الجيش الحر" حرامي!!!	"Opposition" demonstrations in Syria raise the logo: "The Free Army" is a thief!!!	30/11/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36116">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36116</a>
سوريا ... عودة الاتصالات إلى طبيعتها على وقع تصاعد الاشتباكات في ريف دمشق	Syria – Communications are back to their nature as the clashes escalate in Damascus Suburb.	01/12/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36916">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36916</a>
كاميرا المنار تواكب الجيش السوري في داريا بريف دمشق	Al Manar's camera accompanies the Syrian army in Darayya, Damascus Suburb.	05/12/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36961">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36961</a>
المقاتلون في سورية: القاعدة ... والمجموعات الأخرى	The fighters in Syria: Al-Qaida and other groups.	09/12/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36961">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36961</a>
المجموعات المسلحة في سورية تستخدم الأطفال لقطع الرؤوس	The armed groups in Syria employ children for beheading.	10/12/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36961">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=36961</a>
مسيرة في حلب تطالب بطرد المسلحين وارتفاع حدة الحملة الإعلامية على سورية	A march in Aleppo asking for expelling the armed people, and the media campaign against Syria gets severer.	16/12/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=37406">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=37406</a>
مصدر عسكري سوري: مسلحون استعملوا غازا كيميائياً أدى إلى استشهاد 7 جنود سوريين	A Syrian military source: combatants used chemical gas which led to the martyrdom of seven Syrian soldiers.	23/12/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=38006">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=38006</a>
المنار تعاین النازحين السوريين في اللاذقية	Al Manar examines the situation of the Syrian displaced people in Lattakia.	24/12/2012	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=38126">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=38126</a>
معركة دمشق الثالثة وآمال المسلحين	The third battle of Damascus, and the expectations of the armed people.	01/01/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=38716">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=38716</a>
مخيم الزعتري للسوريين في الأردن.. حالة كارثية	Al-zaatari Camp for Syrians in Jordan. A catastrophic situation.	11/01/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=39006">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=39006</a>
الأجانب في سوريا .. لماذا يقتلون ؟	Foreigners in Syria ... Why are they fighting?	12/01/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=39896">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=39896</a>
الجماعات المقاتلة في سورية .. فروعها وبنيتها	The fighting groups in Syria ... Their branches and structure.	20/01/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=40026">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=40026</a>
كاميرا المنار في عقربا.. وهيومن رايتس ووتش تتهم المسلحين بانتهاك أماكن العبادة	Al Manar's camera in Aqraba and Human Rights Watch charges the combatants of violating worship places.	23/01/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=40126">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=40126</a>
العثور على عشرات الجثث لموالين للنظام جنوب حلب	Finding tens of corpses of pro-regime people in the south of Aleppo.	29/01/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=40916">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=40916</a>

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المسلحون يصعدون هجماتهم ضد المواقع الدينية ، ونقمة شعبية على النصر في ادلب	The combatants escalate their attacks against the religious sites, and popular indignation against Al-Nusra in Idleb.	11/02/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=419106">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=419106</a>
انباء عن مقتل 4 ضباط أترك في حلب ومسيرات شعبية في المدينة دعما للجيش	News of killing 4 Turkish officers in Aleppo, and popular processions in the city in support of the army.	15/02/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=42526">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=42526</a>
تفجيرات دمشق الدموية: عشرات الضحايا ومئات الجرحى	Damascus bloody explosions: tens of victims and hundreds of injured people.	21/02/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=43602">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=43602</a>
دفعة جديدة من المقاتلين المدربين اميركي الى سورية ودمشق تشتبه في الاردن	A new group of combatants trained by Americans to Syria, and Damascus suspects Jordan.	15/03/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=44869">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=44869</a>
دمشق: استخدام المجموعات المسلحة "للسلاح الكيميائي" تصعيد خطير	Damascus: using chemical weapons by the armed groups is a serious escalation.	19/03/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=44612">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=44612</a>
طرطوس تستقبل النازحين من المحافظات السورية والدولة توفر لهم جميع احتياجاتهم	Tartous receives the displaced people from the other Syrian governorates and the State provides them with all their needs.	27/03/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=45319">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=45319</a>
لاجئون سوريون في الزعترى يروون بعضا من الانتهاكات بحق النساء	Syrian refugees in Al-Zaatari tell some of the violations committed against women.	30/03/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=45596">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=45596</a>
آثار سورية لم تسلم من نيران المجموعات المسلحة	The Syrian ruins were not safe from the fires of the armed groups.	02/04/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=45360">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=45360</a>
كاميرا المنار في قلب مدينة داريا بريف دمشق	Al-Manar's camera in the heart of Darayya city in Damascus Suburb.	05/04/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=46019">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=46019</a>
معاناة أهالي القرى السورية المتاخمة للحدود مع لبنان	The suffering of the people in the villages which lie on borderline with Lebanon.	15/04/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=46726">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=46726</a>
معركة الحسم في ريف القصير	The decisive battle in Al-Qusair.	20/04/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=47207">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=47207</a>
القضاء على مجموعات مسلحة في "الغوطة الشرقية" الاستراتيجية	Eliminating armed groups in the strategic area of "Eastern Ghouta".	25/04/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=47619">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=47619</a>
التكفيريون وتفجير المقامات	The <i>takfiri</i> people and exploding the shrines.	01/05/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=48068">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=48068</a>
دير مار الياس بريف القصير .. شاهد على ارتكابات المسلحين	Mar Elias Monastery, Al-Qusair suburb, is a witness of what the combatants commit.	08/05/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=48699">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=48699</a>
كيف حول المسلحون في سورية منازل المواطنين إلى مقر عسكرية؟	How the armed people turned the citizens homes into military sites?	12/05/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=48912">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=48912</a>
فيديو اعدامات جديد من قبل جبهة النصر	A video footage of new executions by Jabhat Al-Nusra.	16/05/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=49389">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=49389</a>
المنار " زارت عائلة شهيدين " اعدمتهما المجموعات المسلحة في الرقة بسورية	Al-Manar visited the families of two martyrs executed by the armed groups in Al-Raqqa, Syria.	26/05/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=49670">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=49670</a>

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المنار تدخل مخابئ المسلحين في القصير	Al-Manar enters the hiding places of the armed people in Al-Qusair.	29/05/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=50659">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=50659</a>
معركة القصير كشفت التصدع في بنية المجموعات المسلحة	Al-Qusair's battle uncovered the cracking in the combatants' structure.	08/06/2013	<a href="http://www.almanar.com.lb/alekhab.php?id=50686">http://www.almanar.com.lb/alekhab.php?id=50686</a>
6 آلاف قتل مسلح أجنبي في سوريا	6 thousand foreign combatants murdered in Syria.	10/06/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=50688">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=50688</a>
مجزرة يرتكبها المسلحون في بلدة حطلة بدير الزور شرق سورية	A massacre committed by the armed people in Hatla town, Deir Ezzor, east of Syria.	12/06/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=510796">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=510796</a>
الجيش السوري يستعيد البحدلية وحلبون بريف دمشق ويطبق باتجاه الزياوية	The Syrian army retrieves Al-Bahdaliya and Halboun, Damascus Suburb and advances towards Al-Dhiyabiya.	19/06/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=510799">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=510799</a>
جرائم ذبح وقتل جديدة بقتاوى التكفير في سوريا	New slaughter and murder crimes on basis of <i>takfiri fatwas</i> in Syria.	20/06/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=511449">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=511449</a>
كاميرا المنار يحي سلمان الحلبي وتحدث الشائعات والجيش السوري يحقق نجاحات في برزة	Al Manar's camera in Salman Al-Halabi Quarter disproving the rumors, and the Syrian army realizes successes in Barza.	22/06/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=510809">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=510809</a>
مواد غذائية متفجرة وبيوت مفخخة.. تركة المسلحين في ريف حمص	Explosive foodstuffs and booby-trapped homes, the heritage of the armed people in Homs.	29/06/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=512679">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=512679</a>
أهالي حلب تحت حصار المجموعات المسلحة في شهر رمضان	The people of Aleppo under the combatant groups blockade in the month of Ramadan.	10/07/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=513009">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=513009</a>
معارضون سوريون: اشتباكات بين "الجيش الحر" و"مسلحين جهاديين" في ادلب	Syrian opponents: clashes between "the Free Army" and "jihad combatants" in Idlib.	13/07/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=513006">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=513006</a>
المواطنون السوريون في ظل الحصار	The Syria citizens under the blockade.	16/07/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=513241">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=513241</a>
مراسل الموقع: عدد ضحايا مجزرة خان العسل يفوق المعلن و220 جثة نقلت حتى الان لحلب	The site's correspondent: the number of the victims of Khan Al-Asal is over what has been declared and 220 corpses have been moved to Aleppo so far.	28/07/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=507481">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=507481</a>
السوريون في دمشق يتحدثون الأوضاع الأمنية	The Syrians in Damascus defy the security situation.	28/07/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=510249">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=510249</a>
المسلحون يتراجعون في ريف اللاذقية والمنار تواكب الجيش السوري في عملياته	In Lattakia suburb, the armed people withdraw and Al-Manar accompanies the Syrian army in its operations.	06/08/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=508116">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=508116</a>
مجازر الجماعات التكفيرية في ريف اللاذقية.. ناجون يتحدثون عما جرى مع عائلاتهم	The massacres of the <i>takfiri</i> groups in Lattakia suburb, survivors talk about what happened to their families.	10/08/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=507086">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=507086</a>
الوضع الميداني بريف اللاذقية الشمالي باتجاه الحسم الكامل لمصلحة الجيش السوري	The field situation in the northern suburb of Lattakia is about to be fully decided in favor of the Syrian army.	18/08/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=507409">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=507409</a>

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الجماعات المسلحة في سوريا ... هل استخدمت الكيماوي ؟	Did the armed groups in Syria use the chemical weapon?	25/08/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=575248">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=575248</a>
الشارع السوري مرتاح لجهوزية الجيش تجاه أي تهديد محتمل	The Syrian street is satisfied with the army's readiness for any possible threat	01/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=575841">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=575841</a>
40 قتيلا لـ "جبهة النصرة" في كمين للجيش السوري بريف دمشق	40 of Jabhat Al-Nusra were murdered by an ambush by the Syrian army in Damascus Suburb.	02/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=575844">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=575844</a>
الجيش السوري على تقدمه... ومقاتلون من القوقاز ينشقون عن الجماعات المسلحة	The Syrian army is still advancing and combatants from Caucasia break away from the armed groups.	05/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=582701">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=582701</a>
الجيش السوري يسيطر على تلة الرامق بجبال الزبداني وعلى مناطق استراتيجيات بادل	The Syrian army controls Al-Raqem Hill in Zabadani mountains and on strategic areas in Idleb.	10/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=581732">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=581732</a>
المنار ترصد احراق المسلحين للمساجد والقرآن الكريم في ريف حمص	Al-Manar monitors the burning of mosques and the Holy Quran by the armed people in Homs suburb.	15/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=591589">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=591589</a>
جبهة النصرة تتبنى المجازر بحق "العشرات من اهالي قرى ريف حمص"	Jabhat Al-Nusra adopts the massacres against tens of the people of Homs suburb.	16/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=591601">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=591601</a>
الجيش السوري يستعيد 7 قرى في حماه والنصرة تواصل اجرامها	The Syrian army retrieves 7 villages in Hama, and Al-Nusra continues its criminality.	16/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=591608">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=591608</a>
القاعدة تسيطر على اعزاز السورية.. وتركيا تقفل معايرها	Al-Qaida controls Aazaz, Syria, and Turkey closes all its border crossing points.	19/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=592599">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=592599</a>
اتفاق لوقف النار في اعزاز بين القاعدة والجيش الحر واستمرار المواجهات مع الاكراد	A cease-fire agreement in Aazaz between Al-Qaida and the Free Army, confrontations with Kurds continue.	20/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=592681">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=592681</a>
الاقتتال بين "داعش" و"الحر" يمتد الى اللاذقية	The conflict between "ISIS" and "the Free Army" spreads to Lattakia.	21/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=592684">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=592684</a>
مسلحو "داعش والحر" يتبادلان اتهامات الخيانة ويهددان باستئصال بعضهما	The combatants of "ISIS" and "the Free" exchange the treason charges and threaten of exterminating each other.	24/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=601147">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=601147</a>
داعش ترفع رايثها على كنائس الرقة وتهاجم الاكراد في ريف حلب	"ISIS" raises its flags on the churches of Al-Raqqah and attacks the Kurds in Aleppo suburb.	26/09/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=602347">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=602347</a>
الحرب بين "داعش" وباقي الجماعات المسلحة متواصلة والخسائر كبيرة	The war between "ISIS" and the other armed factions continues and the losses are large.	08/10/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=611338">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=611338</a>
مجازر ضد الانسانية ارتكبتها المسلحون في اللاذقية	Anti-human massacres committed by the armed people in Lattakia.	11/10/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=617153">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=617153</a>
إنجازات للجيش السوري في باب هود بحمص وتقدم في وادي الضيف بادل	The achievements of the Syrian army in Bab Houd in	13/10/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=618451">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=618451</a>

	Homs, and an advance in Wadi Al-Dhaif in Idleb.		
المنار تدخل منطقة البويزة في ريف دمشق بعد سيطرة الجيش عليها	Al-Manar enters Al-Buwaida area in Damascus Suburb after the army controls it.	17/10/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=63926">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=63926</a>
تفجير انتحاري يودي بالعشرات في حماه	A suicide bombing that kills tens in Hama.	20/10/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=63928">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=63928</a>
مفتي "جيش الاسلام في سورية" "يهاجم" "جبهة النصرة"	The "Mufti" of Jaish Al-Islam in Syria "attacks" Jabhat Al-Nusra.	02/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=63934">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=63934</a>
تراجع مستمر للمسلحين... السبيته والغزاة في قبضة الجيش السوري	Continual withdrawal of the armed people. Al-Sbeina and Al-Ghazala controlled by the Syrian army.	07/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64098">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64098</a>
مؤسسات سورية تكافح الغلاء تنفيذاً لوعده الحكومة	The Syrian institutions control the rise in prices in implementation of the government's pledge.	11/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64156">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64156</a>
استسلام مسلحين في ريف دمشق.. والجيش يستعيد المعامل في حلب	The surrender of combatants in Damascus Suburb and the army retrieves the factories in Aleppo.	17/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64506">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64506</a>
الجيش السوري يتقدم في جبال القلمون، وجماعة لواء التوحيد تؤكد مقتل قائدها قرب حلب	The Syrian army advances in Al-Qalamon Mountains, and the group of Liwaa Al-Tawheed assures the murder of its leader near Aleppo.	18/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64646">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64646</a>
الجيش السوري يستعيد العديد من المناطق الاستراتيجية في حلب وريفها	The Syrian army retrieves many strategic areas in Aleppo and its suburb.	21/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64934">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=64934</a>
المسلحون يستهدفون أحياء بدمشق والهدف.. تهجير المسيحيين	The armed people target quarters in Damascus with the aim of driving the Christians away.	23/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=65048">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=65048</a>
مقتل قائد لواء القعقاع بريف دمشق ضمن سلسلة تصفيات قيادات المسلحين	The murder of the leader of Liwaa Al-Qaqaa in Damascus Suburb within a series of liquidating the leaders of the combatants.	26/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=65058">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=65058</a>
المنار تكشف عن جرائم المسلحين في مستشفى الباسل في دير عطية بريف دمشق	Al-Manar uncovers the crimes of the armed people in Al-Basel Hospital, Deir Atiya, Damascus Suburb.	29/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=66368">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=66368</a>
دعم اسرائيلي وعربي وغربي للمسلحين في سوريا.. باعتراف احد قادتهم	Israeli, Arab and western support of the combatants in Syria as one of their leaders admits.	30/11/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=66378">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=66378</a>
قتلى المسلحين في ريف دمشق معظمهم سعوديون	Most of the combatants' murdered people in Damascus Suburb are Saudis.	01/12/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=66435">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=66435</a>
سرقة الآثار في معلولا بريف دمشق	Robbing the ruins in Maaloula, Damascus Suburb.	18/12/2013	<a href="http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=66837">http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=66837</a>

## Chapter 7

<p>رغم الظروف.. الحكومة السورية تستمر في دعم وتأمين مادة الخبز لكافة المواطنين</p>	<p>In spite of the hard circumstances, the Syrian government continues to support and secure bread for all the citizens.</p>	<p>21/12/2013</p>	<p><a href="http://archive.alnassar.com/b/article.php?id=68884">http://archive.alnassar.com/b/article.php?id=68884</a></p>
<p>مسيرة داعمة للجيش في حي دمر البلد بدمشق وأوضاع معضمية الشام إلى التسوية</p>	<p>A procession supporting the army in Dommar Al-Balad Quarter, Damascus, and the situation of Muadamiyyat Al- Sham is about to be settled.</p>	<p>26/12/2013</p>	<p><a href="http://archive.alnassar.com/b/article.php?id=69091">http://archive.alnassar.com/b/article.php?id=69091</a></p>

## Conclusion

This study tackles the coverage of the internal aspect of the Syrian crisis by Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar channels from 2011 to 2013; that is before the expansion of the crisis on the Arab and international levels and before the role of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) got larger as an effective actor in the events. The target of the research is knowing the characteristics of the news discourse which is subject to several effects of which are the political, economic and religious. It also aims at uncovering the propaganda tools through studying the interrelation between the verbal and non-verbal signifiers. The research samples are made up of news reports; the news report has been chosen as a study subject matter because it is the cornerstone of the news coverage. The quantitative analysis of this study shows the general features of the mechanism of the coverage by the two channels while the semiotic analysis presents accurate details that deal with the interrelation between the verbal and non-verbal signifiers. This eventually helps know the mental images that the two channels attempt to introduce to the recipient and know the tools of forming these images.

The importance of the research is linked to the geopolitical importance of Syria especially in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the overlapping of many variables which influence the course of events and the mechanism of media. It is also linked to the influential role of Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar channels on the public opinion of the Arab peoples. Al-Jazeera channel led to wide argumentation as from its start because of its coverage of many “sensitive” issues on the Arab and international levels and because of its being linked to or subject to the Qatari policy. Al-Manar is considered by Israel Hezbollah’s strongly effective weapon in the psychological war. The relation of Hezbollah to the Syrian government and leadership is an important factor which influences the channel’s coverage mechanism in Syria. This research is listed in the frame of propaganda. The overlapping of the variables makes the studied channels direct and indirect propagandists at the same time. It is direct because they cover the crisis in accordance with the interests of their owners and indirect because they convey the propagandas of the conflicting parties in Syria. This fact boosts the importance of the research which studies the methods and tools employed in portraying the Syrian crisis.

The outcomes proved the validity of the research hypotheses. Al-Jazeera’s trend is 100% against president Assad and the Syrian government while Al-Manar’s is supportive by 100%. Al-Jazeera supported the opposition while Al-Manar was hostile to it. Al-Jazeera depended on the opposition’s sources by 70.4% but at the same time tried to prove its credibility through recalling pro-regime sources. The results of the study contradict the studies that affirm the objectivity of Al-Jazeera only because it recalled a variety of sources. This confirms that the quantitative analysis is not enough to know the channels’ trends; the contexts in which the sources were mentioned must be studied. Al-Manar mainly depended on the sources of the Syrian opposition by 21.88% but the purpose of all the contexts was supporting the Syrian government’s propaganda (emphasizing credibility through employing the enemy’s sources). Moreover, the channel recalled anti-regime regional and western sources but the main aim was confirming that there was an international

conspiracy against the Syrian president and government. Al-Jazeera, on the other hand, recalled the sources which supported the Syrian government in order to disprove the propaganda of this government. The correspondents of Al-Jazeera only made up 1.9% of its sources. Al-Manar's correspondents practiced self-censorship; in spite of their existence on the Syrian ground, they depended on the Syrian Space Channel and other Syrian sources as a main source of the news. Al-Manar seemed as an extension of the Syrian Space Channel and the other Syrian channels which support Assad.

Al-Jazeera introduced itself as an independent and strong entity whose strength parallels that of the international news agencies. It did not depend much on news agencies and marginalized the role of the Arab media as a news source. The sources of Al-Manar were various but the target of recalling them was supporting the Syrian government propaganda.

The two channels almost used all the propaganda's technical methods mentioned in chapter four:

**Assertion.** The two channels mainly employed this tool through condensed highlighting of the slogans of the conflicting parties. Al-Jazeera heavily presented the opposition's slogans while Al-Manar asserted those of the Assad's supporters.

**Repetition.** Both channels repeated definite ideas and sentences. The previous studies in the field of propaganda affirm that repetition reinforces the idea in recipient's mind. However, this study proved that repetition is enormously controlled by the contexts. Al-Jazeera repeatedly reported the propaganda of the Syrian government but repetition led to trivializing rather than reinforcing it. This confirms that the influential ability of repetition is connected to the affiliation identity of the sender and to the news contexts.

**Exaggeration.** Al-Jazeera adopted this tool as an offensive weapon against the government and Assad. It covered the demonstrations, the security and military statuses, and the war results in a way that suggests that the situation in Syria is disastrous. To attain this purpose, the channel employed all the verbal and non-verbal signifiers including the voice tone and speed. The research uncovered an important tool which can be considered as a means of magnification; it is presenting the sounds which the videos include along with the news story. Al-Jazeera presented these sounds by a rate of 84.55%. For example, the audience can see and hear the bombing and simultaneously hear the news discourse supported by a voice tone which is able to charge them with emotions and irritation.

**Name-calling.** Both channels used this tool but in different ways. Al-Manar explicitly and directly named the opposition with insulting descriptions such as "terrorists". This means that the channel did not hesitate to show its attitude. However, Al-Jazeera adopted the direct and indirect methods. Sometimes, it described the government forces as "Shabbiha" declaring its attitude of rejecting their actions. Sometimes, it highlighted the opposition's descriptions such



as “the Assad’s gangs” or “the criminal gangs”. Al-Jazeera seemed careful not to be professionally accused of vocabulary selectivity.

**Glittering generalities.** This technique was used to assert the legality of the conflicting parties. Al-Jazeera linked the movements of the opposition to great values like “freedom revolution” and “revolution against injustice”. Al-Manar linked the movements of the government and its supporters to values such as “national sovereignty” and “confronting conspiracy and strife”.

**Reincarnation, similarity, imitation and plain folk.** The two channels adopted this technique through: Language selectiveness, Familiarity and identification and reincarnation of interests.

**Recipient-credible testimonials.** Before talking about this technique, the targeted recipient by these channels must be known. The results of analyzing the sources may help to know this. The two channels highlighted the ally’s and the enemy’s sources altogether. This means that the opponents and supporters of the government were targeted by the two channels. The government’s supporters may doubt its propaganda when they see the ways of presenting it by Al-Jazeera. Similarly, the supporters of the opposition may doubt it when they see its declarations and activities presented on Al-Manar. Choosing the recipient-credible testimonials is a complex issue. It is not limited to recalling declarations but to the contexts of recalling them as well.

**Bandwagon.** Al-Jazeera enticed people and called them to join the forerunners to demonstrations and armed movements. It portrayed the opposition as representative of all the Syrians; therefore, all those who do not join it are losers. Al-Manar attempted to attract the recipient to the Assad supportive camp through concentrating on the firmness of the Syrian state and its close victory and affirming the legality and patriotism of the government which faces a conspiracy due to its stance of resisting the occupation. Both channels concentrated on the popularity of the propagandists through employing phrases like “million-man demonstrations”, “the Syrians want” and “people want”. Promoting popularity aims at polarizing the recipient to join the forerunners.

**Simplification.** Both channels presented simple uncomplicated ideas and sentences. The research found out an important tool that serves simplification. Al-Jazeera’s discourse was often in classical Arabic language because it did not contain many interviews with the people in Syria. Al-Manar’s news content included interviews with people talking in their own local Syrian dialects. Classical Arabic is not in fashion among the people so it may seem somewhat difficult, while the simple expressions in the local dialects can influence the Syrian recipient more than the classical discourse. However, when the Syrian dialects are unintelligible for other Arab peoples Such as Tunisia and Sudan, classical Arabic becomes a means of simplification. So, we conclude that simplification is subjected to the recipient’s knowledge.

**Emotional enticement.** The two channels depended mainly on this tool. Some emotional enticements are motivating for all societies such as concentrating on the gravity of murdering women and children. Some others are suitable for the Syrian or Arab culture in general. For instance, Al-Jazeera considered the men's tears or their having to cook an important indication of the enormity of the crisis.

**Euphemism.** Al-Manar adopted this technique in order to raise the morale of Assad supporters and to prove that the crisis is still under control. For example, instead of saying "the return of the refugees" it said "the return of citizens".

**Diverting Attention.** The two channels used this means when it was not possible to deny a certain event or opinion. They used to cover other events or the same event but concentrating on points that reshape the reality in the recipient's mind. For instance, when several channels were talking about the opposition's killing of unarmed supporters of Assad, Al-Jazeera could not deny it. However, it used to allocate very few seconds about the topic then complete the report talking about the regime's crimes against the people.

**Lesser Than Two Evils.** This tool was used to make the people patient and to encourage them to persevere in their attitudes. This is done through admitting the difficulty of the situation and simultaneously announcing that victory and achieving aims are close.

**Fabricating Crisis.** I could not verify the use of this technique by the channels due to the lack of accurate neutral information that can be considered a reliable reference which is free from the influence of politics.

**Pinpointing the Enemy.** Al-Jazeera made Assad an enemy of the opposition and portrayed overthrowing him as the solution of the crisis. The opposition's enmity of the regime seemed as an enmity of Assad as an individual and the regime seemed as just a tool in the hand of the ruling individual. On Al-Manar's screen, the enemy was of multi identities and forms, but in its multi forms and degrees it seeks to implement a universal conspiracy.

**Inflicting Terror and Chaos.** Al-Jazeera intimidated of future and of the probable results. Its discourse can be considered frightful especially for the Syrian recipient.

**Lying and Misleading.** Lying was not exclusive to changing realities but it was through selecting frames and absencing others.

The principles of propaganda of the conflicting parties were similar to the most prominent ones which Anne Morelli argued. -We do not want war. Al-Jazeera asserted the peacefulness of opposition and the reluctance of the opponents to draw the revolution to an armed conflict. When the channel covered the activities of the armed opposition, it stressed that the opponents had to carry the weapons in order to protect themselves. Al-Manar portrayed the activities of the government security and army as reactions against the armed terrorists' actions and as an imperative necessity to protect Syria and the citizens from the collapse.

-The opponent camp is the only one responsible for the war. -We are defending noble aims. On Al-Jazeera screen, the opposition seemed as holding right, principles and lofty goals. On Al-Manar's screen, the government and the army seemed holders of sublime national and moral values. -Our enemy commits crimes and does terrible actions on purpose, but if we made some mistakes, they would be unintended. What is going on is a war between civilization and barbarism. The enemy commits its crimes without any moral deterrent. -We respect the rules of war and fight with honor but the enemy uses prohibited weapons. -Educated people and artists support our cause. -Our cause has a sacred character, so it should be defended and sacrificed to death. -All those who doubt us and our cause are traitors.

-Demonizing the Opponent. Al-Jazeera demonized the regime in most of the details of the topics it discussed. Al-Manar demonized the opposition in each piece of news. Anne Morelli sees that personifying the opponent is a very important technique. This is what Al-Jazeera did, but Al-Manar did not do. When it discussed that Syria was exposed to an international universal conspiracy in which there are many influential, financing, directing actors, it did not show the recipient an identified clearly depicted opponent. The armed opposition seemed a player who was implementing the agendas of powers some of which were known and some managed all what was going on in Syria from behind the scenes. This method can be considered an important propaganda weapon in the psychological war because it magnifies the image of the enemy and absents its features at the same time. The Syrian government supporting recipients – especially those who are unable to analyze the data accurately – may feel the greatness of their country which resists great powers that participate and cooperate to destroy their country.

-Our losses are few but the enemy's are much larger. The results of the research were compatible to this basis only in some contexts. Al-Manar – reportedly from pro-Syrian government sources – heavily highlighted the regime's losses in 2011 and the first months of 2012 because the victim's image served the propaganda which attempted to polarize the Syrian and international public opinion. However, when it needed to raise the morale, the discourse changed to become that of heroism and victories. Al-Jazeera concentrated on the losses of the unarmed opposition, but it did not talk much about those of the armed one. Hence it preserved the images of the hero and the victim at the same time.

The research concluded other methods that can be a contribution to the field of propaganda:

**Denying and trivializing the existence of the other.** Al-Manar totally denied the existence of a peaceful opposition with legal demands and did not mention any people's demonstration or movement against Assad. Denial seemed as a defensive means in the psychological war. Al-Jazeera did not deny but it trivialized the importance of the processions and movements which supported Assad and the government. Trivialization here seemed as an offensive means. I argue that trivialization is stronger than denial in the psychological war. Denial leads to doubting the credibility of the channel whereas trivialization gives the recipient the illusion that the channel is objective or neutral (it treated the different topics). At the same time, it destroys the enemy's image which it wants to give about itself.

**The people say the truth.** Next to opposition sources, Al-Manar secondly depended on eyewitnesses in Syria by 20.45%. All their declarations were supportive and assertive of the government's propaganda. But Al-Jazeera employed verbal and non-verbal signifiers to prove that all the Syrian people are opponents of Assad. Therefore, the opposition sources seemed as an official spokesperson in the name of all the people. Al-Manar was interested in reporting the viewpoints of males and females and its sample contained different age groups. The differences in the women and men's discourse content can be considered an important means of propaganda. The women used emotional words such as love, wedding party and merry making, whereas the men used phrases of challenge in the face of the conspiracy against their country.

**More concentration on the actions of the enemy.** Both channels concentrated on the activities of the opponent. Al-Jazeera highlighted the actions of the regime by 72.29% in comparison to those of the armed opposition which constituted 27.70%. Al-Manar highlighted the actions of the armed opposition by a rate of 65.45% in comparison to those of the regime which made up 34.54%. This method is important because it gives the propagandists a justification for all their actions.

**Simultaneous absence and presence.** Both channels did not talk much about the declarations and actions of Assad. They rather made him present in a lot of verbal signifiers. For example, Al-Jazeera said: "Assad's regime" and "Assad's soldiers" while Al-Manar used to highlight Assad's name in the statements of the people who supported him. Through this method, Al-Jazeera underestimated Assad as a president yet it highlighted his dictatorship through personifying the regime and the army. Al-Manar kept the crisis far from personification and made the people defend Assad instead of defending him itself in a dry news discourse.

**Hinting.** Al-Jazeera employed this method when it presented only a part of information which can be only understood by those who know the information in full. Hinting can carry different signifiers of which: 1- The channel assumes that the recipient knows the information. 2- The channel uses ambiguity as one of the methods of agitation propaganda. 3- The sender urges the recipient to search for the facts.

**Linking the destiny of the state to that of the people.** Al-Manar adopted this method to show that the enemy of the State and the people are one; therefore, the people should support the State in order to confront this brutal enemy. It always connected between military and civilian victims or between the militant's aggressions on private and public property.

**Alleviation of events' severity through employing non-verbal signifiers.** In order to raise the morale and to portray the Syrian State as a strong one despite the crisis, Al-Manar adopted this method. It did not show images of immense destruction as Al-Jazeera did. It only presented images of murdered people in contexts where the Syrian State appeared as a victim of aggression yet solid at the same time. During the interviews with the displaced people, the

correspondents selected places such as parks which are considered a symbol of rest taking into consideration that the green color symbolizes relaxation and tranquility in the Syrian culture. At a time when the black and grey colors were predominant on Al-Jazeera screen, Al-Manar highlighted the colors which are considered optimistic in the Syrian culture such as the red, the white and the green. The shaky unclear images were repeated on Al-Jazeera screen, but Al-Manar's images were stable and the movement of the camera was easy in such a way that suggests that the situation was still under control. This difference is attributed to the fact that Al-Jazeera depended on the activists' video footages which spread on the internet while Al-Manar depended on the images of professional journalists. Al-Manar did not present the sounds included in the footages by a rate of 70.53% and we only heard the voice of the reporter. This technique helped alleviate the severity of the events.

**One signifier is stronger than many combined signifiers.** Like when Al-Jazeera presents many positive verbal and non-verbal signifiers about Assad yet the voice tone of the journalist is sarcastic. The voice tone changes the literal meaning of the other signifiers. This demonstrates that the number of signifiers and their repetition may not eventually reinforce the idea in the mind of the recipient; the influence is not related to quantity but to quality. This stresses the importance of the semiotic analysis and affirms the inability of the quantitative analysis to give exact results because it depends on the manifest meaning of the word.

**Direct and indirect adoption.** For example, Al-Manar adopted the item "martyr" for all the regime and civilians' murdered people; that is, it took a religious attitude towards the identity of the murdered people. However, Al-Jazeera did not consider the opposition's murdered people martyrs in its discourse but it highlighted this term a lot through presenting the voices included in the video footages. For instance, we hear people shouting: "the martyr is Allah's beloved person".

**Direct and indirect bias.** The partiality of Al-Manar was direct while that of Al-Jazeera was indirect in many contexts.

**Repeating the opponent's propaganda.** This affirms that repetition itself does not fortify the idea but the methods of arguing information and the ways of giving the signifiers do. If repetition had reinforced the idea, many of Al-Jazeera audience would have believed in the regime's propaganda because the channel presented it repeatedly.

**Exploiting the characteristics of Arabic language** especially in the context of emotional enticement. It is like when Al-Jazeera says: "the bereaved city of Daraa". The word city is feminine in Arabic. Al-Jazeera compared the city to a bereaved woman in order to influence the recipient in favor of the opposition.

**Islamizing events and accusing the enemy of sectarianism.** Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar Islamized the crisis as from its beginning but in different contexts. Al-Jazeera showed the regime as an enemy of Islam and the Sunni sect which constitutes the majority of the Syrian

people. Al-Jazeera also Islamized the demonstrations and the armed opposition movements. It even presented the soldiers of Jabhat Al Nusra as heroes and saviors of the people. Moreover, it considered the militants of ISIS revolutionaries. Al-Manar presented the opposition as extremist takfiri elements that assault people even in the holy month of Ramadan and on Holy Days (Eids). This mental image undermines the true affiliation of opposition to Islam. The opposition is extremist but it does not represent true Islam. The Islamic symbols and the veiled faces of the opposition members seemed as emblems of heroism and nobility on Al-Jazeera screen. However, the same symbols and faces seemed as signs of intimidation and horror on Al-Manar screen.

**Animalizing the opponent and undermining them through exploiting the socially prevailing meanings of words.** This is like when Al-Manar states that the Syrian army attacked the “dens” of the militants or “purified” the places where they exist. The prevailing meaning of the word den is “the animal’s habitat” and the word purify is linked to germs.

**Exploiting the signifiers of the mentioned numbers.** This applies to the number of murdered people, the wounded, the refugees, the detainees and even those of the names of the areas mentioned in each report.

**Mentioning the names and types of weapons.** Al-Jazeera verbally and non-verbally concentrated on the regime’s weapons while Al-Manar concentrated on the opposition’s weapons but it presented the images of the tanks of the Syrian army especially in the context of talking about the advance of the military forces and their reclaiming of regions. Al-Manar absolutely negated the use of chemical weapons by the regime whereas Al-Jazeera asserted it.

**Unleashing the recipient's imagination through verbal and non-verbal signifiers.** That is like when Al-Manar states that the Syrian army caused the militants heavy loss without telling the type of loss, or like when Al-Jazeera presents images dominated by darkness and talks about crowded demonstrations. Not giving definite information or the unclear content of the image may make each recipient imagine the event according to his/her experience and connection to the topic.

**Linking victory or the feelings of hope to religious phrases.** For example, the soldiers and leaders of the conflicting parties used phrases like “Inshallah”, “God will” and “Thank God”. Linking the achievements to the will of God makes the cause of the propagandist sound sacred, helped and supported by God.

**Showing the attitudes of children.** Al-Manar presented the attitudes of the kids to assert their love of Assad and eventually the legality of his rule. However, Al-Jazeera exploited their statements which criticized Assad and his actions which caused their homelessness and agony. Kids are an important tool in the context of emotional enticement.

**Disproving the other’s propaganda.** This was done in different ways of which are: skepticism, through using phrases like “the supposed gangs”. Sarcasm verbally or through the

voice tone. Presenting the propaganda of the opponent verbally and undermining it by presenting contrary images. Ordering the propagandas in the news; Al-Jazeera used to present the propaganda of the Syrian government first followed by that of the opposition in order to refute it. Al-Manar explicitly refuted Al-Jazeera's news and considered them lies. The channel also disproved the opposition through reminding the audience that its coverage is a field one and not reported from unreliable sources.

**The channel gives the interviewed people political trends.** For example, the appearance of the people on Al-Manar's channel may make the recipient feel that they were supporters of Assad even if they did not declare it. That is because Al-Manar never interviewed opponents and all the contents of its news are supportive of Assad. The channel may give a political identity to the murdered people as well. The recipient may reckon that the murdered people on Al-Manar's screen are supporters of Assad due to the news contexts.

**Balancing between the discourses of strength and weakness.** Both channels attempted to create a balance between the discourse of victimization and heroism. They also employed this tool to serve the requirements of each stage.

**Images free from a clear meaning and leading the recipient's perception to the images content through the news story.** This is like when Al-Jazeera presents shaky foggy images whose content is indistinguishable along with a news story about attacking the civilians by the regime's forces.

**Exploiting the position of another enemy in the region.** The attitudes of Israel were the most prominent. Al-Manar talked about the gladness and relaxation of Israel in case Assad was overthrown; this is an evidence of the nationalism and integrity of the president. Al-Jazeera did the same when it talked about the fear of Israel of the opposition's control on the bordering areas. This implicitly means that Assad is secretly allied with Israel so it is afraid of his overthrow and that the opposition is nationalist and loyal to the nation's causes.

**Exploiting the interference of allies.** Al-Jazeera portrayed the Syrian regime as a weak one which needs the interference of Hezbollah, Iraqi factions, Iranian forces and Russian soldiers. On the other hand, Al-Manar exploited the interference of the militants who came from several countries to support the opposition and depicted them as mercenaries and terrorists.

**Stressing that the enemy is not strong and that it is rather brutal.**

**Indirect mentioning of the weakness of the opponent in order to justify the military actions.** This is like when Al-Manar says "The Syrian army has eliminated a group of terrorists" without using phrases such as "weak opposition". Not declaring the weakness of the opponent justifies continuing facing the dangerous militants by the government.

**Affirming the maintaining attitudes and continuation** such as the continuation of demonstrating, the continuation of military confrontation, maintaining positions by the people.

**The camera's angles and movement.** As when Al-Jazeera employs the low shot to show the opposition soldiers as heroes and when Al-Manar uses the same shot to show the same soldiers as murderers; the low shot magnifies the meaning of the content.

**Exploiting non-traditional spoils,** especially communication technology. Mobile phones played an important role in disclosing some of the enemy's activities. The conflicting parties used images and videos which they found during battles so that they could detect the opponent's mistakes. Both parties used to document their torturing the other and boast it.

**Metaphors.** Al-Manar used metaphors of a positive optimistic character like "spectrums" and "flow" to describe the processions which supported the government. However, it changed the positive meaning of some signifiers such as "harvest" and turned them into a negative symbol when it used them in the context of talking about the actions of the terrorists. In most contexts, Al-Jazeera borrowed from nature negative signifiers like "strong wind" and "infection" to talk positively about the activities of the opposition. This may help magnify events and serve agitation propaganda.

**Linking all the catastrophic results to the opponent.** The two channels did not mention any actions of actors who exploited the chaos and committed crimes in Syria. These actors may not belong to any camp. All the catastrophes seemed as a result of the actions of the opponent.

**A signifier on behalf of another.** For instance, on Al-Jazeera's screen we see heavy smoke and we immediately know that it indicates bombarding the civilians by the government forces.

**Exploiting the characteristics of the female.** This is related to the culture of the targeted audience. For example, the Arab audience may be influenced when they see a female journalist accompanying the armed opposition's activities more than getting influenced by seeing a male journalist. The confidence of the journalist as a female in the fighters may increase the significance of the message concerning the positivity of the opposition. The female's voice talking about the results of the war can be more influential than the male's. Quantitative studies are important to be more certain of the validity of this idea.

**Integrating the statistical presentation with the emotional enticement.** This technique helps to create balance between the logical the emotional signifiers as they address the mind and feelings of the recipient.

**Addressing the topic of ethnicities and sects indirectly.** For example, the two channels concentrated on presenting the images of the women who wear the Sunni hijab to assert the position of the Sunni sect. On Al-Manar screen, the Sunni sect seemed pro-Assad whereas the



contrary seemed on Al-Jazeera screen. The names of the areas and the dialects of the people were also methods of addressing the different sects indirectly.

**The journalists' engagement in the events.** The positions of the media personnel were clear through many signifiers: pronouns, verbs, their relation to people during the coverage, their relation to the fighters, and their voice tones. The relation of Al-Jazeera's journalists with the armed and civilian opposition seemed strong while the work of Al-Manar's journalists seemed as an extension of the activities and goals of the government.

**Human icons.** Each icon was used to emphasize the validity of the conflicting parties propaganda. Some of the mentioned personalities were historical, some became heroes as a result of media effect, and others represented ethnicities and sects.

**The propagandists spread their propaganda through mentioning or adopting that of another party.** Al-Manar is the main conveyer of the ideology of Hezbollah. Al-Jazeera is the most important media tool in the hand of the Qatari government. Both exploited the propagandas of the Syrian government and the opposition for the service of the ideologies they represented.

Each signifier mentioned in the sample can be considered a weapon that serves the propaganda whether the journalist chose it intentionally or unintentionally, consciously or unconsciously. The cognitive semiotics confirms that the human being often practices communication unconsciously. Distinguishing between the intentionality or unintentionality of the sender is not possible but the signifiers can be studied on the basis of many sciences and approaches. Each part of the news messages shows a weapon that can be used in propaganda. Integrating the analysis Methodologies helps discover these weapons. In this research I noticed that the physical direction of the content in the image can be a war tool but I could not reach a scientific result because I needed to quantify the directionality of the content. However, this requires time and allocating a large space of the research. The same thing applies to quantifying the characteristics and tones of voice, the duration of the shots and the scenes allocated for each topic.

I argue that the physical direction of the content can provide indicators of an important mechanism of forming the content. These indicators may lead the researchers into discovering new relationships between the sender and the signifiers, the receiver and the signifiers, and the relation of the signifiers to each other. For example, I noticed that when Al-Manar talked about the advance of the Syrian army forces with tanks included in the images, it often directed the tanks to the right side of the recipient. And many times, when the channel talked about evacuating the army from areas after regaining safety, it directed the tanks and armored personnel carriers to the left side of the recipient. Many hypotheses can be formulated about this issue but they can only be proved by using several research methods and approaches. Al-Jazeera's physical direction of the content was totally different. The channel adopted shots

with multi directions in such a way that the regime's forces seemed like the monster which exists everywhere, in all the directions of the Syrian ground, sky and water.

Studying the signifiers of repetition and its influence on the recipient requires using more than one research methodology. Studies of propaganda consider repetition a means of reinforcing the ideas yet it may lead to banality.

The practice of propaganda is very complicated and analyzing this practice is more complicated due to the interlacing of many variables which sometimes make things look simple and sometimes complex and inconsistent. The previous recipient of media messages has become a sender and a receiver at the same time owing to the characteristic of interactivity which modern communication media provides. The propagandist needs more efforts to influence the audience. Emotional enticement which previously was basic to propaganda is no more able to influence the recipient. The propagandist needs to use logic and employ firmly connected overlapping of the verbal and non-verbal signifiers in order to persuade the audience emotionally or mentally.